YOU OUGHT TO BE DEAD By Robert Moore WILLIAMS

VOLUME 15 NUMBER 5

SEE BACK COVER

AMAZING STORIES

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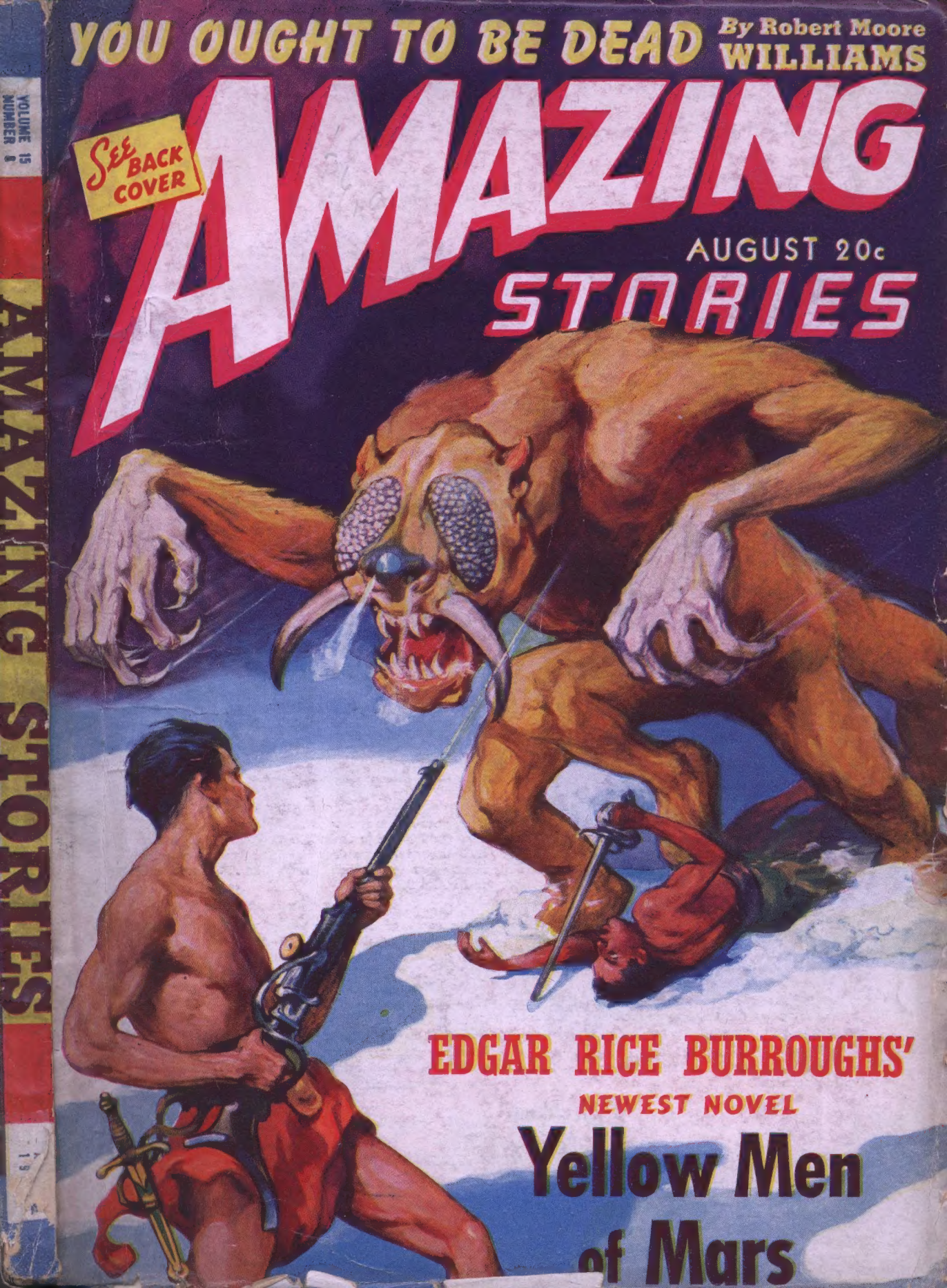

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS'
NEWEST NOVEL

Yellow Men of Mars

AMAZING STORIES

"I don't care how lucky you are, there's one *CHANCE* you *dare not* take!"

"BEFORE I tell you what it is, let me say this: In twenty years of handling salesmen, it's the No. 1 Jonah. I know. Because I once took the chance myself . . . and lost. Let me give you the picture . . .

"For years we had been trying to get a crack at some of the immense and profitable Apex business—without success . . couldn't even get in.

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AUGUST
1941

AMAZING STORIES

TRADE MARK REGISTERED

VOLUME 15
NUMBER 8

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Front cover painting by J. Allen St. John, illustrating a scene from "Yellow Men of Mars"
Back cover painting by Frank R. Paul, depicting a city on Saturn
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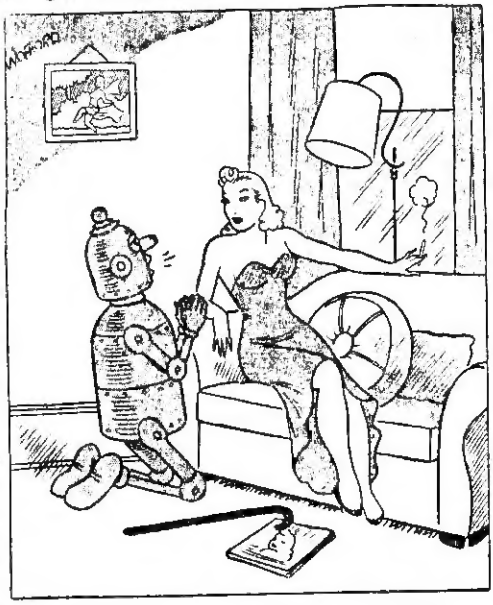
Volume XV
Number 8

The OBSERVATORY by THE Editor

YOUR editor has just returned from his annual vacation, during which he visited the metropolis of New York, and our national capital. But of that, more later; we have more important things to tell you right now. Things about this issue—and the next.

FIRST, the tempo of Burroughs stories is hitting its highest, fastest action with the current John Carter story, "Yellow Men Of Mars." It's the fourth of the Carter stories since our January issue, and there's one more to go. It'll appear in October. After that, we begin a series based on David Innes, about that legendary world inside the earth, Pellucidar.



"Say you'll marry me, Brenda, and make me the happiest machine in the world!"

WE think the St. John painting on our front cover this month, illustrating the Burroughs yarn, is the best one yet, for this series. The scene depicts one of the royal apts which guard the approaches to the ferocious south-polar yellow men's glass enclosed cities.

THIS issue has a collection of the finest stories we've read in a long time. The O'Brien-McGivern opus, for instance, is the first collaboration in humor-science these two master writers have placed on our desk, but they promise more—and we like the idea. It (the story) is a rib-tickler for sure!

THEN there's "Kid Poison" by David V. Reed, which we've been yelling about for months. It's the kid story with a punch we promised in our last issue. We'd like to have your comment on it.

IN short, if you don't find each story in this magazine a fine treat, we'll be greatly disgruntled, because we deliberately set out to smash all our previous performances to bits.

ANOTHER of our cartoonists gets himself presented in our "Meet the Author" department this month. It's R. Newman, whose cartoons have given you so many laughs in the past. You'll find his story on page 132.

BEFORE we forget it, don't miss the August issue of our companion magazine, *Fantastic Adventures*. It has a grand new prize contest that ought to be a cinch for you readers of AMAZING STORIES. There's a story of Mars with a problem, quite a simple one, just begging for a simple solution. And you can win $50 for a few minutes of easy thinking. There are two other cash prizes too, if you miss out on the big one. Be sure to pick up your copy and enter the contest. It'll be on the stands the twentieth of this month. And anyway, you can't afford to miss Nat Schachner's grand novel "The Return of Circe." It's terrific!

NOW, about that New York trip. While we were there, we met everybody who is important in the science fiction world. We had a long talk with David V. Reed, and there'll be some swell stories coming up from him. Then we visited Eando Binder (and his new wife) and Adam Link (and his wife). The result ought to be plenty of fine yarns from this popular team.

(Continued on page 62)

Yellow Men of MARS

By EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

There was death in the narrow pass that led to the hothouse city, and even worse danger beyond. But John Carter had no other choice

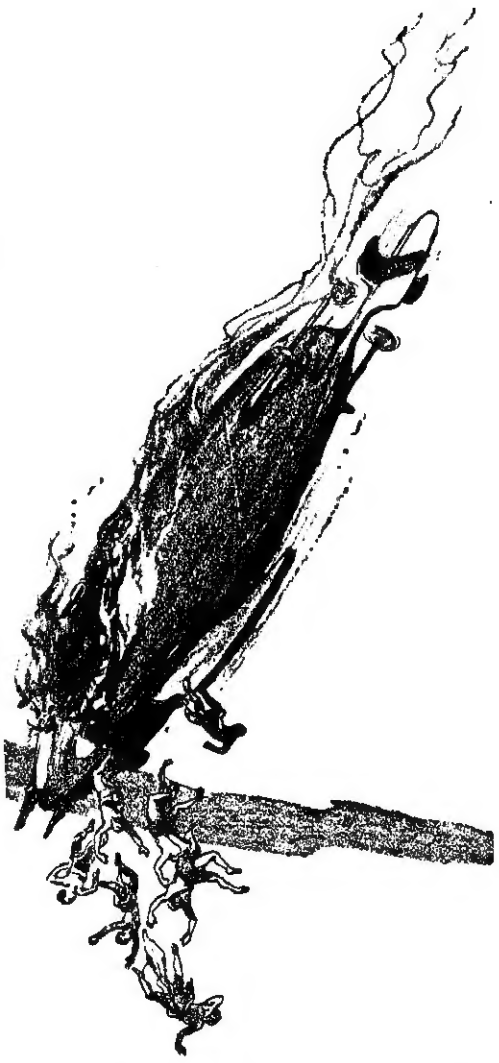
"GOOD bye, First Born!" I said. "Now you have reason to remember John Carter all the more!" I glanced back once toward the valley beneath our keel, then turned forward again and crowded more speed on the flier.

There were four of us aboard the flier I had stolen from the hangar at Kamtol to effect our escape from The Valley of the First Born: Llana of Gathol; Pan Dan Chee of Horz; Jad-han, the brother of Janai of Amhor; and I, John Carter, Prince of Helium and Warlord of Barsoom.

It was one of those startlingly gorgeous Martian nights that fairly take one's breath away. In the thin air of the dying planet, every star stands out in scintillant magnificence against the velvet blackness of the firmament in splendor inconceivable to an inhabitant of Earth.

As we rose above the great rift valley, both of Mars' moons were visible, and Earth and Venus were in conjunction, affording us a spectacle of incomparable beauty. Cluros, the farther moon, moved in stately dignity across the vault of heaven but fourteen thousand miles away, while Thuria, but four thousand miles distant, hurtled through the night from horizon to horizon in less than four hours, casting ever changing shadows on the ground below us which produced the illusion of constant movement, as though the surface of Mars was covered by countless myriads of creeping, crawling things. I wish that I might convey to you some conception of the weird and startling strangeness of the scene and of its beauty; but, unfortunately, my powers of description are wholly inadequate. But perhaps some day you, too, will visit Mars.

As we rose above the rim of the mighty escarpment which bounds the valley, I set our course for Gathol and



opened the throttle wide, for I anticipated possible pursuit; but, knowing the possibilities for speed of this type of flier, I was confident that, with the start we had, nothing in Kamtol could overhaul us if we had no bad luck.

Gathol is supposed by many to be the oldest inhabited city on Mars, and is one of the few that has retained its freedom; and that despite the fact that its ancient diamond mines are the richest known and, unlike practically all the other diamond fields, are today apparently as inexhaustible as ever.

In ancient times the city was built

upon an island in Throxeus, mightiest of the five oceans of old Barsoom. As the ocean receded, Gathol crept down the sides of the mountain, the summit of which was the island on which she had been built, until today she covers the slopes from summit to base, while the bowels of the great hill are honeycombed with the galleries of her mines.

Entirely surrounding Gathol is a great salt marsh, which protects it from invasion by land, while the rugged and ofttimes vertical topography of the mountain renders the landing of hostile airships a precarious undertaking.

Gahan, the father of Llana, is jed of Gathol, which is very much more than just a single city, comprising, as it does, some one hundred forty thousand square miles, much of which is fine grazing land where run their great herds of thoats and zitidars. It was to return Llana to her father and mother, Tara of Helium, that we had passed through so many harrowing adventures since we had left Horz. And now Llana was almost home; and I should soon be on my way to Helium and my incomparable Dejah Thoris, who must long since have given me up for dead.

JAD-HAN sat beside me at the controls, Llana slept, and Pan Dan Chee moped. Moping seems to be the natural state of all lovers. I felt sorry for Pan Dan Chee; and I could have relieved his depression by telling him that Llana's first words after I had rescued her from the tower of Nastor's palace had been of him—inquiring as to his welfare—but I didn't. I wished the man who won Llana of Gathol to win her by himself. If he gave up in despair while they both lived and she remained unmated, then he did not deserve her; so I let poor Pan Dan Chee suffer from the latest rebuff that Llana had inflicted upon him.

We approached Gathol shortly before dawn. Neither moon was in the sky, and it was comparatively dark. The city was dark, too; I saw not a single light. That was strange, and might forebode ill; for Martian cities are not ordinarily darkened except in times of war when they may be threatened by an enemy.

Llana came out of the tiny cabin and crouched on the deck beside me.

"That looks ominous," she said.

"It does to me, too," I agreed; "and I'm going to stand off until daylight. I want to see what's going on before I attempt to land."

"Look over there," said Llana, pointing to the right of the black mass of the mountain; "see all those lights."

"The camp fires of the herdsmen, possibly," I suggested.

"There are too many of them," said Llana.

"They might also be the camp fires of warriors," said Jad-han.

"Here comes a flier," said Pan Dan Chee; "they have discovered us."

From below, a flier was approaching us rapidly.

"A patrol flier doubtless," I said, but I opened the throttle and turned the flier's nose in the opposite direction. I didn't like the looks of things, and I wasn't going to let any ship approach until I could see its insignia. Then came a hail:

"Who are you?"

"Who are you?" I asked in return.

"Stop!" came the order; but I didn't stop; I was pulling away from him rapidly, as my ship was much the faster.

He fired then, but the shot went wide. Jad-han was at the stern gun.

"Shall I let him have it?" he asked.

"No," I replied; "he may be Gatholian. Turn the searchlight on him, Pan Dan Chee; let's see if we can see his insignia."

Pan Dan Chee had never been on a ship before, nor ever seen a searchlight; the little remnant of the almost extinct race of Orovars, of which he was one, that hides away in ancient Horz, has neither ships nor searchlights; so Llana of Gathol came to his rescue, and presently the bow of the pursuing flier was brightly illuminated.

"I can't make out the insignia," said Llana, "but that is no ship of Gathol."

Another shot went wide of us, and I told Jad-han that he might fire. He did and missed. The enemy fired again; and I felt the projectile strike us, but it didn't explode. He had our range; so I started to zig zag, and his next two shots missed us. Jad-han's also missed, and then we were struck again.

"Take the controls," I said to Llana, and I went back to the gun. "Hold her just as she is, Llana," I called, as I took careful aim. I was firing an explosive shell detonated by impact. It struck her full in the bow, entered the hull, and exploded. It tore open the whole front of the ship, which burst into flame, and she commenced to go down by the bow. At first she went slowly; and then she took the last long, swift dive—a flaming meteor that crashed into the salt marsh and was extinguished.

"That's that," said Llana of Gathol.

"I don't think it's all of that as far as we are concerned," I retorted; "we are losing altitude rapidly; one of his shots must have ripped open a buoyancy tank."

I took the controls and tried to keep her up; as, with throttle wide open, I sought to pass that ring of camp fires before we were finally forced down.

THAT was a good little ship—staunch and swift, as are all the ships of The Black Pirates of Barsoom—and it carried us past the farthest camp fires before it finally settled to the ground just at dawn. We were close to a small forest of sorapus trees, and I thought it best to take shelter there until we could reconnoiter a bit.

"What luck!" exclaimed Llana, disgustedly, "and just when I was so sure that we were practically safe and sound in Gathol."

"What do we do now?" asked Pan Dan Chee.

"Our fate is in the hands of our ancestors," said Jad-han.

"But we won't leave it there," I assured them; "I feel that I am much more competent to direct my own fate than are my ancestors, who have been dead for many years. Furthermore, I am more interested in it than they."

"I think perhaps you are on the right track there," said Llana, laughing, "although I wouldn't mind leaving my fate in the hands of my living ancestors—and now, just what is one of them going to do about it?"

"First I am going to find something to eat," I replied, "and then I am going to try to find out who were warming themselves at those fires last night; they might be friends, you know."

"I doubt it," said Llana; "but if they are friends, then Gathol is in the hands of enemies."

"We should know very shortly; and now you three remain here while I go and see if anything edible grows in this forest. Keep a good lookout."

I walked into the forest, looking for roots or herbs and that life-giving plant, the mantalia, the milklike sap of which has saved me from death by thirst or starvation on many an occasion. But that forest seemed to be peculiarly barren of all forms of edible things, and I passed all the way through it and out upon the other side without finding anything that even a starving man would try to eat.

Beyond the forest, I saw some low hills; and that gave me renewed hope, as in some little ravine, where moisture might be held longest, I should doubtless find something worth taking back to my companions.

I had crossed about half the distance from the forest to the hills when I heard the unmistakable clank of metal and creaking of leather behind me; and, turning, saw some twenty red men mounted on riding thoats approaching me at a gallop, their nailless, padded feet making no sound on the soft vegetation which covered the ground.

Facing them, I drew my sword; and they drew rein a few yards from me.

"Are you men of Gathol?" I asked.

"Yes," replied one of them.

"Then I am a friend," I said.

The fellow laughed.

"No Black Pirate of Barsoom is any friend of ours," he shot back.

For the moment I had forgotten the black pigment with which I had covered every inch of my face and body as a disguise to assist me in effecting my escape from The Black Pirates of the Valley of the First Born.

"I am not a Black Pirate," I said.

"Oh, no!" he cried; "then I suppose you are a white ape." At that they all laughed. "Come on now, sheathe your sword and come along with us. We'll let Gan Hor decide what is to be done with you, and I can tell you right now that Gan Hor doesn't like Black Pirates."

"Don't be a fool," I said; "I tell you I am no black pirate—this is just a disguise."

"Well," said the fellow, who thought he was something of a wit, "isn't it strange that you and I should meet?—I'm really a Black Pirate disguised as a red man." This simply convulsed his companions. When he could stop laughing at his own joke, he said, "Come on now, no more foolishness! Or do you want us to come and take you?"

"Come and take me!" I replied. In that, I made a mistake; but I was a little sore at being laughed at.

THEY started circling me at a gallop; and as they did so, they uncoiled the ropes they use to catch thoats. They were whirling them about their heads now and shouting. Suddenly a dozen loops spun through the air at me simultaneously. It was a beautiful demonstration of roping, but I didn't really appreciate it at the moment. Those nooses settled around me from my neck to my heels, rendering me absolutely helpless as they yanked them taut; then the dozen whose ropes had ensnared me rode away all in the same direction, jerking me to the ground; nor did they stop there—they kept on going, dragging me along the ground.

My body rolled over and over in the soft ocher vegetation, and my captors kept riding faster and faster until their mounts were at a full run. It was a most undignified situation for a fighting man; it is like me that I thought first of the injury to my pride, rather than of the injury to my body—or the fact that much more of this would leave me but a bloody corpse at the ends of twelve rawhide ropes.

They must have dragged me half a mile before they finally stopped, and only the fact that the mosslike vegetation which carpets most of Mars *is* soft found me alive at the end of that experience.

The leader rode back to me, followed by the others. He took one look at me, and his eyes went wide.

"By my first ancester!" he exclaimed; "he is no Black Pirate—the black has rubbed off!"

I glanced at myself; sure enough, much of the pigment had been rubbed off against the vegetation through which I had been dragged, and my skin was now a mixture of black and white streaks smeared with blood.

The man dismounted; and, after disarming me, took the nooses from about me.

"He isn't a Black Pirate and he isn't even a red man," he said to his companions; "he's white and he has gray eyes. By my first ancestor, I don't believe he's a man at all. Can you stand up?"

I came to my feet. I was a little bit groggy, but I could stand.

"I can stand," I said, "and if you want to find out whether or not I'm a man, give me back my sword and draw yours," and with that I slapped him in the face so hard that he fell down. I was so mad that I didn't care whether he killed me or not. He came to his feet cursing like a true pirate from the Spanish main.

"Give him his sword!" he shouted. "I was going to take him back to Gan Hor alive, but now I'll leave him here dead."

"You'd better take him back alive, Kor-an," advised one of his fellows. "We may have captured a spy; and if you kill him before Gan Hor can question him, it won't go so well for you."

"No man can strike me and live," shouted Kor-an; "where is his sword?"

One of them handed me my longsword, and I faced Kor-an.

"To the death?" I asked.

"To the death!" replied Kor-an.

"I shall not kill you, Kor-an," I said; "and you cannot kill me, but I shall teach you a lesson that you will not soon forget." I spoke in a loud tone of voice, that the others might hear.

One of them laughed, and said,

"You don't know who you're talking to, fellow. Kor-an is one of the finest swordsmen in Gathol. You will be dead in five minutes."

"In one," said Kor-an, and came for me.

I WENT to work on Kor-an then, after trying to estimate roughly how many bleeding cuts and scratches I had on my body. He was a furious but clumsy fighter. In the first second I drew blood from his right breast; then I cut a long gash in his right thigh. Again and again I touched him, drawing blood from cuts or scratches. I could have killed him at any time, and he could touch me nowhere.

"It has been more than a minute, Kor-an," I said.

He did not reply; he was breathing heavily, and I could tell from his eyes that he was afraid. His companions sat in silence, watching every move.

Finally, after I had cut his body from forehead to toe, I stepped back, lowering my point.

"Have you had enough, Kor-an?" I asked, "or do you want me to kill you?"

"I chose to fight to the death," he said, courageously; "it is your right to kill me—and I know that you can. I know that you could have killed me any time from the moment we crossed swords."

"I have no wish to kill a brave man," I said.

"Call the whole thing off," said one of the others; "you are up against the greatest swordsman anyone ever saw, Kor-an."

"No," said Kor-an, "I should be disgraced if I stopped before I killed him or he killed me. Come!" He raised his point.

I dropped my sword to the ground and faced him.

"You now have your chance to kill me," I told him.

"But that would be murder," he said; "I am no assassin."

"Neither am I, Kor-an; and if I ran you through, even while you carried your sword, I should be as much a murderer as you, were you to kill me now; for even with a sword in your hand you are as much unarmed against me as I am now against you."

"The man is right," spoke up one of the Gatholians. "Sheathe your sword, Kor-an; no one will hold it against you."

Kor-an looked at the others, and they all urged him to quit. He rammed his sword into its scabbard and mounted his thoat.

"Get up behind me," he said to me. I mounted and they were off at a gallop.

After about half an hour they entered another grove of sorapus, and presently came to a cluster of the rude huts used by the warrior-herdsmen of Gathol. Here was the remainder of the troop to which my captors belonged. These herdsmen are the warriors of Gathol, being divided into regular military units. This one was a utan of a hundred men commanded by a dwar, with two padwars, or lieutenants under him. They remain on this duty for one month, which is equivalent to about seventy days of Earth time; then they are relieved and return to Gathol city.

Gan Hor, the dwar, was sitting in front of one of the shelters playing jetan with a padwar when I was taken before him by Kor-an. He looked us both up and down for a full minute.

"In the name of Issus!" he exclaimed, "what have you two been doing —playing with a herd of banths or a tribe of white apes? And who is this?"

"A prisoner," said Kor-an; then he explained quite honestly why we were in the condition we were.

Gan Hor scowled.

"I'll take this matter up with you later, Kor-an," he said; then he turned to me. "Who are you?"

"I am the father of Tara of Helium," I said, "the princess of your jed."

GAN HOR leaped to his feet, and Kor-an staggered as though he had been struck; I thought he was going to fall.

"John Carter!" exclaimed Gan Hor. "The white skin, the gray eyes, the swordsmanship of which Kor-an has told me. I have never seen John Carter, but you could be no other;" then he wheeled upon Kor-an. "And you dragged the Prince of Helium, Warlord of Barsoom for half a mile at the ends of your ropes!" He was almost screaming. "For that, you die!"

"No," I said. "Kor-an and I have settled that between us; he is to be punished no further."

These warrior-herdsmen of Gathol live much like our own desert nomads, moving from place to place as the requirements of pasturage and the presence of water dictate. There is no surface water in Gathol other than the moisture in the salt marsh that encircles the city; but in certain places water may be found by sinking wells, and in these spots they make their camps, as here in the sorapus grove to which I had been brought.

Gan Hor had water brought for me; and while I was washing away the black pigment, the dirt, and the blood, I told him that Llana of Gathol and two companions were not far from the spot where Kor-an had captured me; and he sent one of his padwars with a number of warriors and three extra thoats to bring them in.

"And now," I said, "tell me what is happening to Gathol. The fact that we were attacked last night, coupled with the ring of camp fires encircling the

city, suggests that Gathol is besieged by an enemy."

"You are right," replied Gan Hor; "Gathol is surrounded by the troops of Hin Abtol, who styles himself Jeddak of Jeddaks of the North. He came here some time ago in an ancient and obsolete flier, but as he came in peace he was treated as an honored guest by Gahan. They say that he proved himself an egotistical braggart and an insufferable boor, and ended by demanding that Gahan give him Llana as a wife—he already had seven, he boasted.

"Of course, Gahan told him that Llana of Gathol would choose her own mate; and when Llana refused his proposition, he threatened to come back and take her by force. Then he went away, and the next day our Princess started out for Helium on a ship with twenty-five members of her personal guard. She never reached Helium, nor has she been seen or heard of since, until you just told me that she is alive and has returned to Gathol.

"But we soon heard from Hin Abtol. He came back with a large fleet of the most ancient and obsolete fliers that I have ever seen; some of his ships must be over a hundred years old. He demanded the surrender of Gathol.

"His ships were crammed with warriors, thousands of whom leaped overboard and descended upon the city with equilibrimotors.* There was fighting in the avenues and upon the roofs of buildings all of one day, but we eventually destroyed or made prisoners of all of them; so, finding that he could not take the city by storm, Hin Abtol laid siege to it.

"He has sent all but a few of his ships away, and we believe that they have returned to the frozen north for reinforcements. We who were on herd duty at the beginning of the investment are unable to return to the city, but we are continually harassing the warriors of Hin Abtol who are encamped upon the plain."

"So they are using equilibrimotors," I said; "it seems strange that any peoples from the frozen north should have these. They were absolutely unknown in Okar when I was there."

I HAD listened to Gan Hor with feelings of the deepest concern, for I knew that Gathol was not a powerful country and that a long and persistent siege must assuredly reduce it unless outside help came. Gathol depends for its food supplies upon the plains which comprise practically all of its territory. The far northwest corner of the country is cut by one of Barsoom's famous canals; and here the grains, and vegetables, and fruits which supply the city are raised; while upon her plains graze the herds that supply her with meat. An enemy surrounding the city would cut off all these supplies; and while Gahan doubtless had reserves stored in the city, they could not last indefinitely.

In discussing this with Gan Hor, I remarked that if I could get hold of a flier I'd return to Helium and bring a fleet of her mighty war ships and transports with guns and men enough to wipe out Hin Abtol and his Panars off the face of Barsoom.

"Well," said Gan Hor, "your flier is here; it came with Hin Abtol's fleet.

* The equilibrimotor is an ingenious device for individual flying. It consists of a broad belt, not unlike the life belt used aboard passenger ships on Earth; the belt is filled with the eighth Barsoomian ray, or ray of propulsion, to a sufficient degree to equalize the pull of gravity and thus to maintain a person in equilibrium between that force and the opposite force exerted by the eighth ray. Attached to the back of the belt is a small radium motor, the controls for which are on the front of the belt; while rigidly attached to and projecting from the upper rim of the belt is a strong, light wing with small hand levers for quickly altering its position. They are very effective for landing troops in an enemy city by night. —Ed.

One of my men recognized it and your insignia upon it the moment he saw it; and we have all been wondering how Hin Abtol acquired it; but then, he has ships from a score of different nations, and has not bothered to remove their insignias."

"He found it in a courtyard in the deserted city of Horz," I explained; "and when he was attacked by green men, he made off in it with a couple of his warriors, leaving the others to be killed."

Just then the padwar who had gone to fetch Llana, Pan Dan Chee, and Jadhan returned with his detachment—and three riderless thoats!

"They were not there," he said; "though we searched everywhere, we could not find them; but there was blood on the ground where they had been."

CHAPTER II

I Enlist as a Panthan

SO Llana of Gathol was lost to me again! That she had been captured by Hin Abtol's warriors, there seemed little doubt. I asked Gan Hor for a thoat, that I might ride out and examine the spot at which the party had been taken; and he not only acceded to my request, but accompanied me with a detachment of his warriors.

There had evidently been a fight at the place that I had left them; the vegetation was trampled, and there was blood upon it; but so resilient is this mosslike carpeting of the dead sea bottoms of Mars, that, except for the blood, the last traces of the encounter were fast disappearing; and there was no indication of the direction taken by her captors.

"How far are their lines from here?" I asked Gan Hor.

"About a haad," he replied—that is not quite three miles.

"We might as well return to your camp," I said; "we haven't a sufficiently strong force to accomplish anything now. I shall return after dark."

"We can make a little raid on one of their encampments tonight," suggested Gan Hor.

"I shall go alone," I told him; "I have a plan."

"But it won't be safe," he objected. "I have a hundred men with whom I am constantly harassing them; we should be glad to ride with you."

"I am going only for information, Gan Hor; I can get that better alone."

We returned to camp, and with the help of one of Gan Hor's warriors I applied to my face and body the red pigment that I always carry with me for use when I find it necessary to disguise myself as a native-born red man—a copper colored ointment such as had first been given me by the Ptor brothers of Zodanga many years ago.

After dark I set out on thoatback, accompanied by Gan Hor and a couple of his warriors; as I had accepted his offer of transportation to a point much nearer the Panar lines. Fortunately the heavens wre temporarily moonless, and we came quite close to the enemy's first fires before I dismounted and bid my new friends goodbye.

"Good luck!" said Gan Hor; "and you'll need it."

Kor-an was one of the warriors who had accompanied us.

"I'd like to go with you, Prince," he said; "thus I might atone for the thing I did."

"If I could take anyone, I'd take you, Kor-an," I assured him. "Anyway, you have nothing to atone for; but if you want to do something for me, promise that you will fight always for Tara of Helium and Llana of Gathol."

"On my sword, I swear it," he said; and then I left them and made my way cautiously toward the Panar camp.

Once again, as upon so many other occasions, I used the tactics of another race of red warriors—the Apaches of our own Southwest—worming my way upon my belly closer and closer toward the lines of the enemy. I could see the forms of warriors clustered about their fires, and I could hear their voices and their rough laughter; and, as I drew nearer, the oaths and obscenities which seem to issue most naturally from the mouths of fighting men; and when a gust of wind blew from the camp toward me, I could even smell the sweat and the leather mingling with the acrid fumes of the smoke of their fires.

A SENTRY paced his post between me and the fires; when he came closest to me, I flattened myself upon the ground. I heard him yawn. When he was almost on top of me, I rose up before him; and before he could voice a warning cry, I seized him by the throat. Three times I drove my dagger into his heart. I hate to kill like that; but now there was no other way, and it was not for myself that I killed him—it was for Llana of Gathol, for Tara of Helium, and for Dejah Thoris, my beloved princess.

Just as I lowered his body to the ground, a warrior at a nearby fire arose and looked out toward us.

"What was that?" he asked his fellows.

"The sentry," one of them replied; "there he is now." I was slowly pacing the post of the departed.

"I could have sworn I saw two men scuffling there," said the first speaker.

"You are always seeing things," said a third.

I walked the post until they had ceased to discuss the matter and had turned their attention elsewhere; then I knelt beside the dead man and removed his harness and weapons, which I immediately donned. Now I was, to outward appearances anyway, a soldier of Hin Abtol, a Panar from some glazed, hothouse city of the frozen North.

Walking to the far end of my post, I left it and entered the camp at some distance from the group which included the warrior whose suspicions I had aroused. Although I passed close to another group of warriors, no one paid any attention to me. Other individuals were wandering around from fire to fire, and so my movements attracted no notice.

I must have walked fully a haad inside the lines away from my point of entry before I felt that it would be safe to stop and mix with the warriors. Finally I saw a lone warrior sitting beside a fire, and approached him.

"Kaor!" I said using the universal greeting of Barsoom.

"Kaor!" he replied. "Sit down. I am a stranger here and have no friends in this dar." A dar is a unit of a thousand men, analogous to our Earthly regiment. "I just came down today with a fresh contingent from Pankor. It is good to move about and see the world again, after having been frozen in for fifty years."

"You haven't been away from Pankor for fifty years!" I exclaimed, guessing that Pankor was the name of the Arctic city from which he hailed, and hoping that I was guessing right.

"No," he said; "and you! How long were you frozen in?"

"I have never been to Pankor," I said; "I am a panthan who has just joined up with Hin Abtol's forces since they came south." I thought this the safest position to take, since I should be sure to arouse suspicion were I to

claim familiarity with Pankor, when I had never been there.

"Well," said my companion, "you must be crazy."

"Why?" I asked.

"Nobody but a crazy man would put himself in the power of Hin Abtol. Well, you've done it; and now you'll be taken to Pankor after this war is over, unless you're lucky enough to be killed; and you'll be frozen in there until Hin Abtol needs you for another campaign. What's your name?"

"Dotor Sojat," I replied, falling back on that old time name the green Martian horde of Thark had given me so many years before.

"Mine is Em-tar; I am from Kobol."

"I thought you said you were from Pankor."

"I'm a Kobolian by birth," he explained. "Where are you from?"

"We panthans have no country," I reminded him.

"But you must have been born somewhere," he insisted.

"Perhaps the less said about that the better," I said, attempting a sly wink.

He laughed.

"Sorry I asked," he said.

SOMETIMES, when a man has committed a political crime, a huge reward is offered for information concerning his whereabouts; so, as well as changing his name, he never divulges the name of his country. I let Em-tar think that I was a fugitive from justice.

"How do you think this compaign is going?" I asked.

"If Hin Abtol can starve them out, he may win," replied Em-tar; "but from what I have heard he could never take the city by storm. These Gatholians are great fighters, which is more than can be said for those who fight under Hin Abtol—our hearts aren't in it; we have no feeling of loyalty for Hin Abtol; but these Gatholians now, they're fighting for their homes and their jed; and they love 'em both. They say that Gahan's Princess is a daughter of The Warlord of Barsoom. Say, if he hears about this and brings a fleet and an army from Helium, we might just as well start digging our graves."

"Are we taking many prisoners?" I asked.

"Not many. Three were taken this morning; one of them was the daughter of Gahan, the Jed of Gathol; the other two were men."

"That's interesting," I said; "I wonder what Hin Abtol will do with the daughter of Gahan."

"That I wouldn't know," replied Em-tar, "but they say he's sent her off to Pankor already. You hear a lot of rumors in an army, though; and most of them are wrong."

"I suppose Hin Abtol has a big fleet of fliers," I said.

"He's got a lot of old junk, and not many men capable of flying what he has got."

"I'm a flier," I said.

"You'd better not let 'em know it, or they'll have you on board some old wreck," advised Em-tar.

"Where's their landing field here?"

"Down that way about a haad;" he pointed in the direction I had been going when I stopped to talk with him.

"Well, goodby, Em-tar," I said rising.

"Where are you going?"

"To fly for Hin Abtol of Pankor," I said.

I MADE my way through the camp to where a number of fliers were lined up; it was an extremely ragged, unmilitary line, suggesting inefficiency; and the ships were the most surprising aggregation of obsolete relics I have ever seen; they were museum pieces.

Some warriors were sitting around fires nearby; and, assuming that they were attached to the flying service, I approached them.

"Where is the flying officer in command?" I asked.

"Over there," said one of the men, pointing at the largest ship on the line. "Why—do you want to see him?"

"Yes."

"Well, he's probably drunk."

"What's his name?" I asked.

"Odwar Phor San," replied my informant. Odwar is about the same as general, or brigadier general. He commands ten thousand men in the army or a fleet in the navy.

"Thanks," I said; "I'll go over and see him."

"You wouldn't, if you knew him; he's as mean as an ulsio."

I walked over to the big ship. It was battered and weather-beaten, and must have been at least fifty years old. A boarding ladder hung down amidships, and at its foot stood a warrior with drawn sword.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"I have a message for Odwar Phor San," I said.

"Who is it from?"

"That is none of your business," I told him; "send word to the odwar that Dotor Sojat wishes to see him on an important matter."

The fellow saluted with mock elaborateness.

"I didn't know we had a jedwar among us," he said. "Why didn't you tell me?"

Now, jedwar is the highest rank in a Barsoomian army or navy, other than that of jed or jeddak or Warlord, a rank created especially for me by the jeddaks of five empires. That warrior would have been surprised could he have known that he had conferred upon me a title far inferior to my own.

I laughed at his little joke, and said, "One never knows whom one is entertaining."

"If you really have a message for the old ulsio, I'll call the deck watch; but, by Issus, you'd better have a message of importance."

"I have," I assured him; and I spoke the truth, for it was of tremendous importance to me; so he hailed the deck watch and told him to tell the odwar that Dotor Sojat had come with an important message for him.

I WAITED about five minutes, and then I was summoned aboard and conducted to one of the cabins. A gross, slovenly man sat before a table on which was a large tankard and several heavy, metal goblets. He looked at me scowlingly out of bleary eyes.

"What does that son of a calot want now?" he demanded.

I guess that he referred to a superior officer, and probably to Hin Abtol. Well, if he thought I bore a message from Hin Obtol, so much the better.

"I am to report to you as an experienced flier," I said.

"He sent you at this time of night to report to me as a flier?" he almost shouted at me.

"You have few experienced fliers," I said. "I am a panthan who has flown every type of ship in the navy of Helium. I gathered that you would be glad to get me before some other commander snapped me up. I am a navigator, and familiar with all modern instruments; but if you don't want me, I shall then be free to attach myself elsewhere."

He was befuddled by strong drink, or I'd probably never have gotten away with such a bluff. He pretended to be considering the matter seriously; and while he considered it, he poured himself another drink, which he swallowed

in two or three gulps—what didn't run down his front. Then he filled another goblet and pushed it across the table toward me.

"Have a drink!" he said.

"Not now," I said; "I never drink when I am on duty."

"You're not on duty."

"I am always on duty; I may have to take a ship up at any moment."

He pondered this for several minutes with the assistance of another drink; then he filled another goblet and pushed it across the table toward me.

"Have a drink," he said.

I now had two full goblets in front of me; it was evident that Phor San had not noticed that I had failed to drink the first one.

"What ship shall I command?" I asked; I was promoting myself rapidly. Phor San paid no attention to my question, being engaged in what was now becoming a delicate and difficult operation—the pouring of another drink; most of it went on the table, from where it ran down into his lap.

"What ship did you say I was to command?" I demanded.

He looked bewildered for a moment; then he tried to draw himself together with military dignity.

"You will command the *Dusar*, Dwar," he said; then he filled another goblet and pushed it toward me. "Have drink, Dwar," he said. My promotion was confirmed.

I walked over to a desk covered with an untidy litter of papers, and searched until I found an official blank; on it I wrote:

> To Dwar Dotor Sojat:
> You will immediately take over command of ship *Dusar*.
> By order of
>
> Odwar Commanding

After finding a cloth and wiping the liquor from the table in front of him, I laid the order down and handed him a pen.

"You forgot to sign this, Odwar," I said. He was commencing to weave, and I saw that I must hurry.

"Sign what?" he demanded, reaching for the tankard.

I pushed it away from him, took his hand, and placed the pen point at the right place on the order blank.

"Sign here," I ordered.

"Sign here," he repeated, and laboriously scrawled his name; then he fell forward on the table, asleep. I had been just in time.

I WENT on deck; both moons were now in the sky, Cluros just above the horizon, Thuria a little higher; by the time Cluros approached zenith, Thuria would have completed her orbit around Barsoom and passed him, so swift her flight through the heavens.

The deck watch approached me.

"Where lies the *Dusar?*" I asked.

He pointed down the line.

"About the fifth or sixth ship, I think," he said.

I went overside; and as I reached the ground, the sentry there asked, "Was the old ulsio as drunk as ever?"

"He was perfectly sober," I replied.

"Then some one had better send for the doctor," he said, "for he must be sick."

I walked along the line, and at the fifth ship I approached the sentry at the foot of its ladder.

"Is this the *Dusar?*" I asked.

"Can't you read?" he demanded, impudently.

I looked up then at the insignia on the ship's bow; it was the *Dusar*.

"Can you read?" I asked, and held the order up in front of him.

He snapped to attention and saluted.

"I couldn't tell by your metal," he said, sullenly. He was quite right; I was wearing the metal of a common warrior.

I looked the ship over. From the ground it hadn't a very promising appearance—just a disreputable, obsolete old hulk. Then I climbed the ladder and stepped to the deck of my new command; there was no boatswain's call to pipe the side; there was only one man on watch; and he was curled up on the deck, fast asleep.

I walked over and poked him with the toe of a sandal.

"Wake up, there!" I ordered.

He opened an eye and looked up at me; then he leaped to his feet.

"Who are you?" he demanded. "What are you doing here? What do you mean by kicking me in the ribs and waking me up?"

"One question at a time, my man," I said. "I shall answer your first question, and that will answer the others also." I held the order out to him.

As he took it, he said,

"Don't call me 'my man,' you—" But he stopped there; he had read the order. He saluted and handed the order back to me, but I noticed just the suggestion of a grin on his face.

"Why did you smile?" I asked.

"I was thinking that you probably got the softest job in Hin Abtol's navy," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"You won't have anything to do; the *Dusar* is out of commission—she won't fly."

So! Perhaps Odwar Phor San was not as drunk as I had thought him.

CHAPTER III

I Command a Ship

THE deck of the *Dusar* was weather-beaten and filthy; everything was in disorder, but what difference did that make if the ship wouldn't fly?

"How many officers and men comprise her complement?" I asked.

The fellow grinned and pointed to himself.

"One," he said, "or, rather, two, now that you are here."

I asked him his name, and he said that it was Fo-nar. In the United States he would have been known as an ordinary seaman, but the Martian words for seaman and sailor are now as obsolete as the oceans with which they died, almost from the memory of man. All sailors and soldiers are known as *thans*, which I have always translated as *warriors*.

"Well, Fo-nar," I said, "let's have a look at our ship. What's wrong with her? Why won't she fly?"

"It's the engine, sir," he said; "it won't start any more."

"I'll have a look over the ship," I said, "and then we'll see if we can't do something about the engine."

I took Fo-nar with me and went below. Everything there was filthy and in disorder.

"How long has she been out of commission?" I asked.

"About a month."

"You certainly couldn't have made all this mess by yourself in a month," I said.

"No, sir; she was always like this even when she was flying," he said.

"Who commanded her? Whoever he was, he should be cashiered for permitting a ship to get in this condition."

"He won't ever be cashiered, sir," said Fo-nar.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because he got drunk and fell overboard on our last flight," Fo-nar explained, with a grin.

I inspected the guns, there were eight of them, four on a side beside smaller

bow and stern guns on deck; they all seemed to be in pretty fair condition, and there was plenty of ammunition. The bomb racks in the bilge were full, and there was a bomb trap forward and another aft.

There were quarters for twenty-five men and three officers, a good galley, and plenty of provisions. If I had not seen Odwar Phor San, I could not have understood why all this material—guns, ammunitions, provisions, and tackle—should have been left on a ship permanently out of commission. The ship appeared to me to be about ten years old—that is, after a careful inspection; superficially, it looked a hundred.

I told Fo-nar to go back on deck and go to sleep, if he wished to; and then I went into the dwar's cabin and lay down; I hadn't had much sleep the night before, and I was tired. It was daylight when I waked, and found Fo-nar in the galley getting his breakfast. I told him to prepare mine, and after we had both eaten I went to have a look at the engine.

IT hurt me to go through that ship and see the condition its drunken skipper had permitted it to get into. I love these Barsoomian fliers, and I have been in the navy of Helium for so many years that ships have acquired almost human personalities for me. I have designed them; I have superintended their construction; I have developed new ideas in equipment, engines, and armament; and several standard flying and navigating instruments are of my invention. If there is anything I don't know about a modern Martian flier; then nobody else knows it.

I found tools and practically dismantled the engine, checking every part. While I was doing this, I had Fo-nar start cleaning up the ship. I told him to start with my cabin and then tackle the galley next. It would have taken one man a month or more to put the *Dusar* in even fair condition, but at least we would make a start.

I hadn't been working on the engine half an hour before I found what was wrong with it—just dirt! Every feed line was clogged; and that marvellous, concentrated, Martian fuel could not reach the motor.

I was appalled by the evidence of such stupidity and inefficiency, though not entirely surprised; drunken commanders and Barsoomian fliers just don't go together. In the navy of Helium, no officer drinks while on board ship or on duty; and not one of them drinks to excess at any time.

If an officer were ever drunk on board his ship, the crew would see to it that he was never drunk again; they know that their lives are in the hands of their officers, and they don't purpose trusting them to a drunken man—they simply push the officer overboard. It is such a well established custom, or used to be before drinking on the part of officers practically ceased, that no action was ever taken against the warrior who took discipline into his own hands, even though the act were witnessed by officers. I rather surmised that this time honored custom had had something to do with the deplorable accident that had robbed the *Dusar* of her former commander.

The day was practically gone by the time I had cleaned every part of the engine thoroughly and reassembled it; then I started it; and the sweet, almost noiseless and vibrationless hum of it was music to my ears. I had a ship—a ship that would fly!

One man can operate such a ship, but of course he can't fight it. Where, however, could I get men? I didn't want just any men; I wanted good fighting men who would just as lief fight against

Hin Abtol as not.

Pondering this problem, I went to my cabin to clean up; it looked spick-and-span. Fo-nar had done a good job; he had also laid out the harness and metal of a dwar—doubtless the property of the late commander. Bathed and properly garbed, I felt like a new man as I stepped out onto the upper deck. Fo-nar snapped to attention and saluted.

"Fo-nar," I said, "are you a Panar?"

"I should say not," he replied with some asperity. "I am from Jahar originally, but now I have no country—I am a panthan."

"You were there during the reign of Tul Axtar?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied; "it was on his account that I became an exile—I tried to kill him, and I got caught; I just barely escaped with my life. I cannot go back so long as he is alive."

"You can go back, then," I said; "Tul Axtar is dead."

"How do you know, sir?"

"I know the man who killed him."

"Just my luck!" exclaimed Fo-nar; "now that I might go back, I can't."

"Why can't you?"

"For the same reason, sir, that wherever you are from you'll never go back, unless you are from Panar, which I doubt."

"No, I am not from Panar," I said; "but what makes you think I won't go back to my own country?"

"Because no one upon whom Hin Abtol gets his hands ever escapes, other than through death."

"OH, come, Fo-nar," I said; "that is ridiculous. What is to prevent either one of us from deserting?"

"If we deserted here," he replied, "we would immediately be picked up by the Gatholians and killed; after this campaign is over, we will not make a landing until we reach Panar; and from Panar there is no escape. Hin Abtol's ships never stop at a friendly city, where one might find an opportunity to escape; for there are no cities friendly to Hin Abtol. He attacks every city that he believes he can take, sacks it, and flies away with all the loot he can gather and with as many prisoners as his ships will carry—mostly men; they say he has a million now, and that he plans eventually to conquer Helium and then all of Barsoom. He took me prisoner when he sacked Raxar on his way down from Panar to Gathol; I was serving there in the army of the jed."

"You would like to return to Jahar?" I asked.

"Certainly," he replied. "My mate is there, if she still lives; I have been gone twenty years."

"You feel no loyalty toward Hin Abtol?"

"Absolutely none," he replied; "why?"

"I think I can tell you. I have the same power that all Barsoomians have of being able to read the mind of another when he happens to be off guard; and a couple of times, Fo-nar, your subconscious mind has dropped its guard and permitted me to read your thoughts; I have learned several things about you. One is that you are constantly wondering about me—who I am and whether I am to be trusted. For another thing, I have learned that you despise the Panars. I also discovered that you were no common warrior in Jahar, but a dwar in the jeddak's service—you were thinking about that when you first saw me in the metal and harness of a dwar."

Fo-nar smiled.

"You read well," he said; "I must be more careful. You read much better than I do, or else you guard your thoughts more jealously than I; for I have not been able to obtain even the

slightest inkling of what is passing in your mind."

"No man has ever been able to read my mind," I said, and that is very strange, too, and quite inexplicable. The Martians have developed mind reading to a point where it is a fine art, but none has ever been able to read my mind. Perhaps that is because it is the mind of an Earth man, and may account for the fact that telepathy has not advanced far on our planet.

"You are fortunate," said Fo-nar; "but please go on and tell me what you started to."

"Well," I said, "in the first place, I have repaired the engine—the *Dusar* can now fly."

"Good!" exclaimed Fo-nar. "I said you were no Panar; they are the stupidest people in the world. No Panar could ever have repaired it; all they can do is let things go to wrack and ruin. Go on."

"Now we need a crew. Can we find from fifteen to twenty-five men whom we can trust and who can fight—men who will follow me anywhere I lead them to win their freedom from Hin Abtol?"

"I can find you all the men you need," replied Fo-nar.

"Get busy then," I said; "you are now First Padwar of the *Dusar*."

"I am getting up in the world again," said Fo-nar, laughing. "I'll start out immediately, but don't expect a miracle—it may take a little time to find the right men."

"Have them report to the ship after dark, and tell them to be sure that no one sees them. What can we do about that sentry at the foot of the ladder?"

"The one who was on duty when you came aboard is all right," said Fo-nar; "he'll come with us. He's on from the eighth to the ninth zodes, and I'll tell the men to come at that time."

"Good luck, padwar!" I said, as he went overside.

THE remainder of the day dragged slowly. I spent some time in my cabin looking through the ship's papers. Barsoomian ships keep a log just as Earth ships do, and I occupied several hours looking through the log of the *Dusar*. The ship had been captured four years before while on a scientific expedition to the Arctic, since then, under Panar commanders, the log had been very poorly kept. Some times there were no entries for a week, and those that were made were unprofessional and sloppy; the more I learned about the Panars the less I liked them —and to think that the creature who ruled them aspired to conquer a world!

About the end of the seventh zode Fo-nar returned.

"I had much better luck than I anticipated," he said; "every man I approached knew three or four he could vouch for; so it didn't take long to get twenty-five. I think, too, that I have just the man for Second Padwar. He was a padwar in the army of Helium, and has served on many of her ships."

"What is his name?" I asked. "I have known many men from Helium."

"He is Tan Hadron of Hastor," replied Fo-nar.

Tan Hadron of Hastor! Why, he was one of my finest officers. What ill luck could have brought him to the navy of Hin Abtol?

"Tan Hadron of Hastor," I said aloud; "the name sounds a little familiar; it is possible that I knew him." I did not wish anyone to know that I was John Carter, Prince of Helium; for if it became known, and I was captured, Hin Abtol could have wrested an enormous ransom from Tardos Mors, Jeddak of Helium and grandfather of my mate, Dejah Thoris.

Immediately after the eighth zode, warriors commenced to come aboard the *Dusar*. I had instructed Fo-nar to immediately send them below to their quarters, for I feared that too much life on the deck of the *Dusar* might attract attention; I had also told him to send Tan Hadron to my cabin as soon as he came aboard.

About half after the eighth zode someone scratched on my door; and when I bade him enter, Tan Hadron stepped into the cabin. My red skin and Panar harness deceived me, and he did not recognize me.

"I am Tan Hadron of Hastor," he said; "Padwar Fo-nar instructed me to report to you."

"You are not a Panar?" I asked.

He stiffened.

"I am a Heliumite from the city of Hastor," he said, proudly.

"Where is Hastor?" I asked.

He looked surprised at such ignorance.

"It lies directly south of Greater Helium, sir; about five hundred haads. You will pardon me," he added, "but I understood from Padwar Fo-nar that you knew many men from Helium, and so I imagined that you had visited the empire; in fact he gave me to understand that you had served in our navy."

"That is neither here nor there," I said. "Fo-nar has recommended you for the post of Second Padwar aboard the *Dusar*. You will have to serve me faithfully and follow wherever I lead; your reward will consist of your freedom from Hin Abtol."

I could see that he was a little bit skeptical about the whole proposition now that he had met me—a man who had never heard of Hastor couldn't amount to much; but he touched the hilt of his sword and said that he would follow me loyally.

"Is that all, sir?" he asked.

"Yes," I said; "for the time being. After the men are all aboard I shall have them mustered below deck, and at that time I shall name the officers; please be there."

He saluted, and turned to go.

"Oh, by the way," I called to him, "how is Tavia?"

At that he wheeled about as though he had been shot, and his eyes went wide.

"What do you know of Tavia, sir?" he demanded. Tavia is his mate.

"I know that she is a very lovely girl, and that I can't understand why you are not back in Hastor with her; or are you stationed in Helium now?"

He came a little closer, and looked at me intently. As a matter of fact, the light was not very good in my cabin, or he would have recognized me sooner. Finally his jaw dropped, and then he unbuckled his sword and threw it at my feet.

"John Carter!" he exclaimed.

"Not so loud, Hadron," I cautioned; "no one here knows who I am; and no one must, but you."

"You had a good time with me, didn't you, sir?" he laughed.

"It has been some time since I have had anything to laugh about," I said; "so I hope you will forgive me; now tell me about yourself and how you got into this predicament."

"Perhaps half the navy of Helium is looking for Llana of Gathol and you," he said. "Rumors of the whereabouts of one or the other of you have come from all parts of Barsoom. Like many another officer I was scouting for you or Llana in a one-man flier. I had bad luck, sir; and here I am. One of Hin Abtol's ships shot me down, and then landed and captured me."

"Llana of Gathol and I, with two companions, were also shot down by one of Hin Abtol's ships," I told him.

"While I was searching for food, they were captured, presumably by some of Hin Abtol's warriors, as we landed behind their lines. We must try to ascertain, if possible, where Llana is; then we can plan intelligently. Possibly some of our recruits may have information; see what you can find out."

He saluted and left my cabin. It was good to know that I had such a man as Tan Hadron of Hastor as one of my lieutenants.

CHAPTER IV

I Face a Revolt

SHORTLY after Tan Hadron left my cabin, Fo-nar entered to report that all but one of the recruits had reported and that he had the men putting the flier in ship-shape condition. He seemed a little bit worried about something, and I asked him what it was.

"It's about this warrior who hasn't reported," he replied. "The man who persuaded him to join up is worried, too. He said he hadn't known him long, but since he came aboard the *Dusar* he's met a couple of men who know the fellow well; and they say he's an ulsio."

"Well, there's nothing we can do about it now," I said. "If this man talks and arouses suspicion, we may have to take off in a hurry. Have you assigned each man to his station?"

"Tan Hadron is doing that now," he replied. "I think we have found a splendid officer in that man."

"I am sure of it," I agreed. "Be sure that four men are detailed to cut the cables instantly, if it becomes necessary for us to make a quick getaway."

When on the ground, the larger Martian fliers are moored to four deadmen, one on either side at the bow and one on either side at the stern. Unless a ship is to return to the same anchorage, these deadmen are dug up and taken aboard before she takes off. In the event of forced departure, such as I anticipated might be necessary in our case, the cables attached to the deadmen are often cut.

Fo-nar hadn't been gone from my cabin five minutes before he came hurrying in again.

"I guess we're in for it, sir," he said; "Odwar Phor San is coming aboard! That missing recruit is with him; he must have reported all he knew to Phor San."

"When the odwar comes aboard, bring him down to my cabin; and then order the men to their stations; see that the four men you have detailed for that duty stand by the mooring cables with axes; ask Tan Hadron to start the engine and stand by to take off; post a man outside my cabin door to pass the word to take off when I give the signal; I'll clap my hands twice."

Fo-nar had gone only a couple of minutes before he returned.

"He won't come below," he reported; "he's storming around up there like a mad thoat, demanding to have the man brought on deck who gave orders to recruit a crew for the *Dusar*."

"Is Tan Hadron at the controls ready to start the engine?" I asked.

"He is," replied Fo-nar.

"He will start them, then, as soon as I come on deck; at the same time post your men at the mooring cables; tell them what the signal will be."

I waited a couple of minutes after Fo-nar had left; then I went on deck. Phor San was stamping up and down, evidently in a terrible rage; he was also a little drunk.

I walked up to him and saluted.

"Did you send for me, sir?" I asked.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"Dwar commanding the *Dusar*, sir," I replied.

"Who said so?" he yelled. "Who assigned you to this ship? Who assigned you to any ship?"

"You did, sir."

"I?" he screamed. "I never saw you before. You are under arrest. Arrest him!" He turned to a warrior at his elbow—my missing recruit, as I suspected.

"Wait a minute," I said; "look at this; here's a written order over your own signature assigning me to the command of the *Dusar.*" I held the order up where he could read it in the bright light of Mars' two moons.

HE looked surprised and a little crestfallen for just a moment; then he blustered:

"It's a forgery! Anyway, it didn't give you authority to recruit warriors for the ship." He was weakening.

"What good is a fighting ship without warriors?" I demanded.

"You don't need warriors on a ship that won't fly, you idiot," he came back. "You thought you were pretty cute, getting me to sign that order; but I was a little cuter — I knew the *Dusar* wouldn't fly."

"Well, then, why all the fuss, sir?" I asked.

"Because you're plotting something; I don't know what, but I'm going to find out—getting men aboard this ship secretly at night. I rescind that order, and I place you under arrest."

I had hoped to get him off the ship peaceably, for I wanted to make sure of Llana's whereabouts before taking off. One man had told me that he had heard that she was on a ship bound for Pankor, but that was not definite. I also wished to know if Hin Abtol was with her.

"Very well, Phor San," I said; "now let me tell you something. I am in command of this ship, and I intend to stay in command. I'll give you and this rat here three seconds to get over the side, for the *Dusar* will take off in three seconds," and then I clapped my hands twice.

Phor San laughed a sneering laugh.

"I told you it wouldn't fly," he said; "now come along! If you won't come quietly, you'll be taken;" he pointed overside. I looked and saw a strong detachment of warriors marching toward the *Dusar;* at the same time, the *Dusar* rose from the ground.

Phor San stood in front of me, gloating.

"What are you going to do now?" he demanded.

"Take you for a little ride, Phor San," I replied, and pointed overside.

He took one look, and then ran to the rail. His warriors were looking up at him in futile bewilderment. Phor San shouted to the padwar commanding them

"Order the *Okar* to pursue and take this ship!" The *Okar* was his flagship.

"Perhaps you'd like to come down to my cabin and have a little drink," I suggested, the liquor of the former commander being still there. "You go with him," I ordered the recruit who had betrayed us; "you will find liquor in one of the cabinets;" then I went to the bridge. On the way, I sent a warrior to summon Fo-nar. I told Tan Hadron to circle above the line of ships; and when Fo-nar reported, I gave him his orders, and he went below.

"We can't let them take to the air," I told Tan Hadron; "this is not a fast ship, and if several of them overhauled us we wouldn't have a chance."

Following my orders, Tan Hadron flew low toward the first ship on the line; it was the *Okar,* and she was about to take off. I signalled down to Fo-nar, and an instant later there was a terrific explosion aboard the *Okar*—our first

bomb had made a clean hit! Slowly we moved down the line, dropping our bombs; but before we had reached the middle of it, ships at the lower end were taking off and projectiles were bursting around us from the ground batteries.

"It's time we got out of here," I said to Tan Hadron. He opened the throttle wide then, and the *Dusar* rose rapidly in a zig zag course.

Our own guns were answering the ground batteries, and evidently very effectively, for we were not hit once. I felt that we had come out of the affair so far very fortunately. We hadn't disabled as many ships as I had hoped that we might, and there were already several in the air which would doubtless pursue us; I could see one ship on our tail already, but she was out of range and apparently not gaining on us rapidly, if at all.

I TOLD Tan Hadron to set his course due north, and then I sent for Fonar and told him to muster all hands on deck; I wanted a chance to look over my crew and explain what our expedition involved. There was time for this now, while no ships were within range of us, which might not be true in a short time.

The men came piling up from below and from their stations on deck; they were, for the most part, a hard-bitten lot, veterans, I should say, of many a campaign. As I looked them over, I could see that they were sizing me up; they were probably wondering more about me than I was about them, for I was quite sure what they would do if they thought they could get the upper hand of me—I'd "fall" overboard, and they would take over the ship; then they'd quarrel among themselves as to what they would do with it and where they would fly it; in the end, half a dozen of the hardiest would survive, make for the nearest city, sell the *Dusar,* and have a wild orgy — if they didn't wreck her before.

I asked each man his name and his past experience; there were, among the twenty-three, eleven panthans and twelve assassins; and they had fought all over the world. Seven of the panthans were from Helium, or had served in the Helium navy. I knew that these men were accustomed to discipline. The assassins were from various cities, scattered all over Barsoom. I didn't need to ask them, to be quite sure that each had incurred the wrath of his Guild and had been forced to flee in order to escape assassination himself; they were a tough lot.

"We are flying to Pankor," I told them, "in search of the daughter of the jed of Gathol, who has been abducted by Hin Abtol. There may be a great deal of fighting before we get her; if we succeed and live, we will fly to Helium; there I shall turn the ship over to you, and you can do what you please with it."

"You're not flying me to Pankor," said one of the assassins; "I've been there for twenty-five years, and I'm not going back."

This was insubordination verging on mutiny. In a well disciplined navy, it would have been a very simple thing to handle; but here, where there was no higher authority than I, I had to take a very different course from a commander with a powerful government behind him. I stepped up to the man and slapped him as I had slapped Kor-an; and, like Kor-an, he went down.

"You're flying wherever I fly you," I said; "I'll have no insubordination on this ship."

He leaped to his feet and whipped out his sword, and there was nothing for me to do but draw also.

"The penalty for this, you under-

stand, is death," I said, "—unless you sheathe your sword immediately."

"I'll sheathe it in your belly, you calot!" he cried, making a terrific lunge at me, which I parried easily and then ran him through the right shoulder. I knew that I would have to kill him, for the discipline of the ship and perhaps the fate of Llana of Gathol might hinge on this question of my supremacy and my authority; but first I must give an exhibition of swordplay that would definitely assure the other members of the crew that the lethal thrust was no accident, as they might have thought had I killed him at once.

So I played with him as a cat plays with a mouse, until the other members of the crew, who had stood silent and scowling at first, commenced to ridicule him.

"I thought you were going to sheathe your sword in his belly," taunted one.

"Why don't you kill him, Gan-ho?" demanded another. "I thought you were such a great swordsman."

"I can tell you one thing," said a third: "you are not going to fly to Pankor, or anywhere else. Good bye, Gan-ho! you are dead."

Just to show the other men how easily I could do it, I disarmed Gan-ho, sending his blade rattling across the deck. He stood for a moment glaring at me like a mad beast; then he turned and ran across the deck and dove over the rail. I was glad that I did not have to kill him.

I turned to the men gathered before me.

"Is there any other who will not fly to Pankor?" I asked.

Several of them grinned sheepishly; and there was much scuffing of sandals on the deck, but no one replied.

"I had you mustered here to tell where we were flying and why; also that Fo-nar is First Padwar, Tan Hadron is Second Padwar, and I am your Dwar—we are to be obeyed. Return to your stations."

SHORTLY after the men dispersed, Phor San and his satellite appeared on deck; they were both drunk. Phor San came toward me and stopped in front of me, waving an erratic finger at me.

"In the name of Hin Abtol, Jeddak of Jeddaks of the North," he declaimed, "I order you to turn over the command of this ship to me, or suffer the full consequences of your crime of mutiny."

I saw the men on deck eyeing the two banefully.

"You'd better go below," I said; "you might fall overboard."

Phor San turned to some of the crew members.

"I am Odwar Phor San," he announced, "commander of the fleet; put this man in irons and return the ship to the air field!"

"I think you have gone far enough, Phor San," I said; "if you continue, I shall have to assume that you are attempting to incite my crew to mutiny, and act accordingly. Go below!"

"You trying to give me orders on one of my ships?" he demanded. "I'll have you understand that I am Phor San—"

"Commander of the fleet," I finished for him. "Here," I said to a couple of warriors standing near, "take these two below, and if they don't behave themselves, tie them up."

Fuming and blustering, Phor San was dragged below. His companion went quietly; I guess he knew what was good for him.

The one ship was still hanging onto our tail and not gaining perceptibly, but there were two just behind her which were overhauling both of us.

"That doesn't look so good," I said to Tan Hadron.

"Let's show them something," he said.

"What, for instance?" I asked.

"Do you remember that maneuver of yours the last time Helium was attacked by an enemy fleet, where you got the flagship and two other ships that thought you were running from them?"

"All right," I said, "we'll try it." Then I sent for Fo-nar and gave him full instructions. While we were talking, I heard a series of piercing screams, gradually diminishing in the distance; but my mind was so occupied with this other matter, that I scarcely gave them a thought. Presently I got an "all's ready" report from Fo-nar, and told Tan Hadron to go ahead with the maneuver.

The *Dusar* was going full speed ahead against a strong head wind, and when he brought her about she sped toward the oncoming ships like a racing thoat. Two of them were in position to open up on us when we came within range; however, they commenced firing too soon. We quite properly held our fire until it was effective. We were all firing our bow guns—the only ones that could be brought to bear; and no one was doing much damage.

As we drew closer to the leading ship, I saw considerable confusion on her deck; I imagine they thought we were going to ram them.

Just then our gunner succeeded in putting her bow gun out of commission, which was fortunate indeed for us; then Tan Hadron elevated the *Dusar's* nose, and we rose above the leading ship. As we passed over her, there was a terrific explosion on her deck and she burst into flame. Tan Hadron turned to port so fast that the *Dusar* lay over on her side, and we on deck had to hang to anything we could get hold of to keep from going overboard; by this maneuver, he crossed over the second ship; and the bombers in the bilge of the *Dusar* dropped a heavy bomb on her deck. With the detonation of the bomb, she turned completely over, and then plummeted toward the ground, four thousand feet below. The explosion must have burst all her buoyancy tanks.

Only one ship now remained in our immediate vicinity; and as we made for her, she turned tail and ran, followed by the cheers of our men. We now resumed our course toward the north, the enemy having abandoned the chase.

THE first ship was still burning, and I directed Tan Hadron to approach her to learn if any of the crew remained alive. As we came closer, I saw that she was hanging bow down, the whole afterpart of the ship being in flames. The bow was not burning, and I saw a number of men clinging to holds upon the tilted deck.

My bow gunner thought I was going to finish them off, and trained his piece on them; but I stopped him just in time; then I hailed them.

"Can you get at your boarding harness?" I shouted.

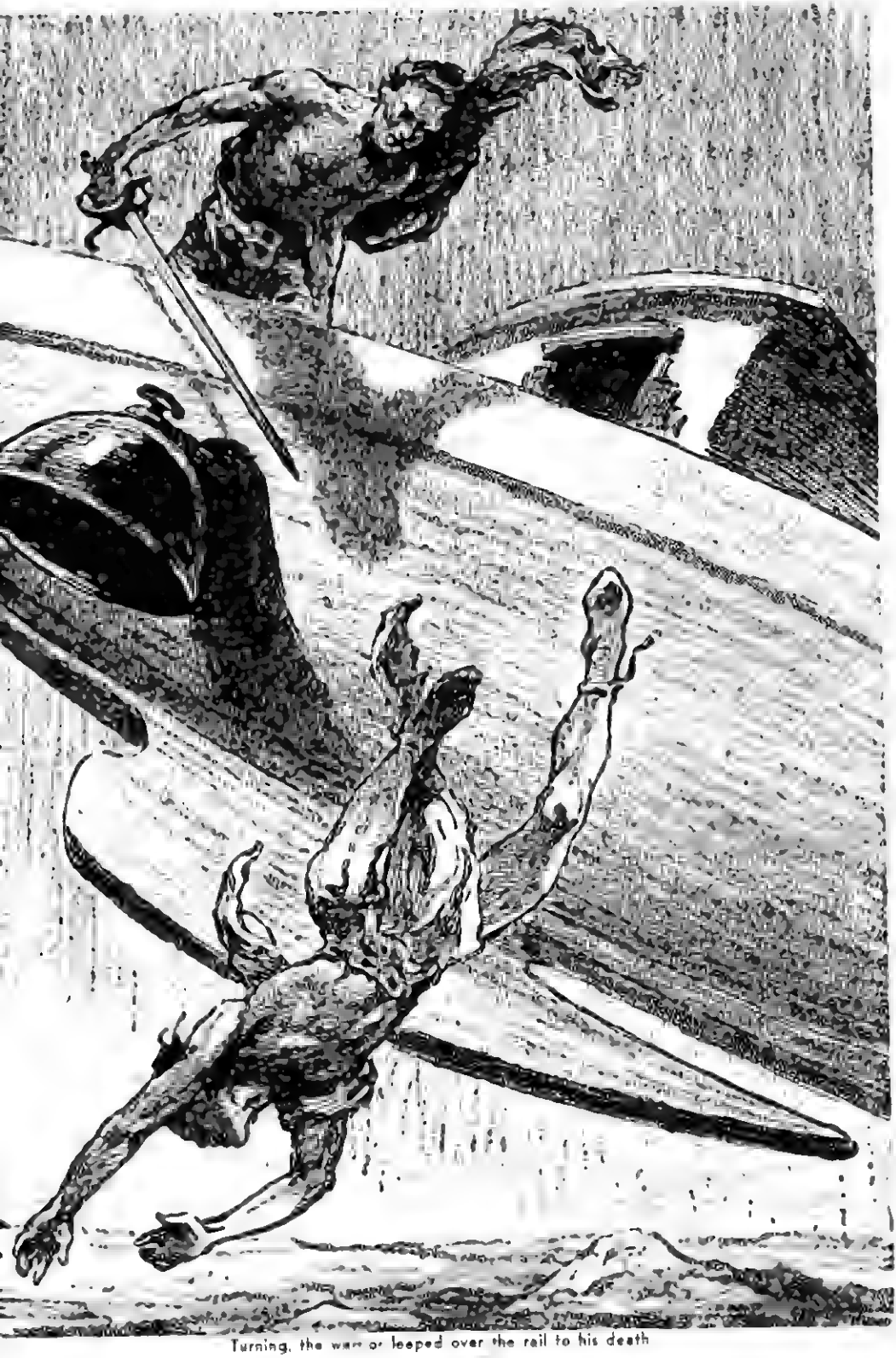
"Yes," came back the answer.

"I'll pull in below you and take you off," I called, and in about fifteen minutes we had taken off the five survivors, one of which was a Panar padwar.

They were surprised that I hadn't either finished them off when I had them at such a disadvantage, or let them hang there and burn. The padwar was sure that we had some ulterior motive in taking them off the burning ship, and asked me how I intended to have them killed.

"I don't intend to kill you at all," I said, "unless I have to."

My own men were quite as surprised as the prisoners; but I heard one of them say,



Turning, the man leaped over the rail to his death

"The Dwar's been in the Helium navy—they don't kill prisoners of war in Helium." Well, they don't kill them in all Martian countries, except that most do kill their prisoners if they find it difficult or impossible to take them home into slavery.

"What are you going to do with us?" asked the padwar.

"I'll either land as soon as it is convenient, and set you free; or I'll let you enlist and come with us. You must understand, however, that I am at war with Hin Abtol."

All five decided to cast their lot with us, and I turned them over to Fo-nar to assign them to watches and prescribe their duties. My men were gathered amidships discussing the engagement; they were as proud as peacocks.

"We destroyed two ships and put a third to flight without suffering a casualty," one was saying.

"That's the kind of a Dwar to fly under," said another. "I knew he was all right when I saw him handle Gan-ho. I tell you there's a man to fight for."

After overhearing this conversation and a lot more like it, I felt much more assured as to our possible success.

A little later, as I was crossing the deck, I saw one of the warriors who had taken Phor San and his companion below; and I hailed him and asked him if the prisoners were all right.

"I am sorry to report, sir," he said, "that they both fell overboard."

"How could they fall overboard when they were below?" I demanded.

"They fell through the after bomb trap, sir," he said, without cracking a smile.

CHAPTER V

Toward the Pole

NATURALLY I was a little suspicious of the dependability of Gordon, the Panar padwar we had taken off the disabled Panar ship. He was the only Panar aboard the *Dusar,* and the only person aboard who might conceivably owe any allegiance to Hin Abtol. I cautioned Fo-nar and Tan Hadron to keep an eye on the fellow, although I really couldn't imagine how he could harm us.

As we approached the North Polar region, it was necessary to issue the warm fur clothing which the *Dusar* carried in her stores—the white fur of apts for the warriors, and the black and yellow striped fur of orluks for the three officers; and to issue additional sleeping furs to all.

I was quite restless that night with a perfectly baseless premonition of impending disaster, and about the 9th zode (1:12 A.M. E.T.) I arose and went on deck. Fo-nar was at the wheel, for as yet I didn't know any of the common warriors of the crew well enough to trust them with this important duty.

There was a group of men amidships, whispering among themselves. As they were not members of the watch, they had no business there at that time of night; and I was walking toward them to order them below, when I saw three men scuffling farther aft. This infraction of discipline requiring more immediate attention than the gathering on the deck, I walked quickly toward the three men, arriving just as two of them were about to hurl the third over the rail.

I seized the two by their collars and dragged them back; they dropped their victim and turned on me; but when they recognized me, they hesitated.

"The Panar was falling overboard," said one of the men, rather impudently.

Sure enough, the third man was Gordon, the Panar. He had had a mighty close call.

"Go below, to my cabin," I told him; "I will talk with you there later."

"He won't talk too much, if he knows what's good for him," one of the men who had tried to throw him overboard shouted after him as he walked away.

"What is the meaning of this?" I demanded of the two men, whom I recognized as assassins.

"It means that we don't want any Panars aboard this ship," replied one.

"Go to your quarters," I ordered; "I'll attend to you later." It was my intention to immediately have them put in irons.

They hesitated; one of them moved closer to me. There is only one way to handle a situation like that—be first. I swung a right to the fellow's chin, and as he went down I whipped out my sword and faced them.

"I'll run you both through if you lay a hand on a weapon," I told them, and they knew that I meant it. I made them stand against the rail then, with their backs toward me, and disarmed them. "Now go below," I said.

As they walked away, I saw the men in the group amidships watching us, and as I approached them they moved away and went below before I could order them to do so. I went forward and told Fo-nar of what had happened, cautioning him to be constantly on the lookout for trouble.

"I am going below to talk to the Panar," I said; "I have an idea that there was more to this than just the wish to throw him overboard; then I'll have a talk with some of the men. I'm going to rouse Tan Hadron first and instruct him to have those two assassins put in irons at once.

"I'll be back on deck shortly; the three of us will have to keep a close watch from now on; those men weren't on deck at this hour in the night just to get fresh air."

I WENT below then and awakened Tan Hadron, telling him what had occurred on deck and ordering him to take a detail of men and put the two assassins in irons; after that, I went to my cabin. Gor-don arose from a bench and saluted as I entered.

"May I thank you, sir," he said, "for saving my life."

"Was it because you are a Panar that they were going to throw you overboard?" I asked.

"No, sir, it was not," he replied. "The men are planning to take over the ship —they are afraid to go to Pankor— and they tried to get me to join with them, as none of them can navigate a ship and I can; they intended killing you and the two padwars. I refused to join them, and tried to dissuade them; then they became afraid that I would report their plans to you, as I intended doing; so they were going to throw me overboard. You saved my life, sir, when you took me off that burning ship; and I am glad to offer it in defense of yours—and you're going to need all the defense you can get; the men are determined to take over the ship, though they are divided on the question of killing you."

"They seemed very contented to serve under me immediately after our engagement with your three ships," I said; "I wonder what could have changed them."

"Fear of Hin Abtol, as the ship drew nearer to Pankor," replied Gor-don; "they are terrified at the thought that they might be frozen in there again for years."

"Pankor must be a terrible place," I said.

"For them, it would be," he replied.

I saw to it that he was armed, and then I told him to follow me on deck. There would be at least four of us, and I hoped that some of the crew might be

loyal. Tan Hadron of Hastor and I could give a good account of ourselves; as to Fo-nar and Gor-don, I did not know.

"Come!" I said to the Panar, and then I opened my cabin door and stepped into the arms of a dozen men, waiting there, who fell upon me and bore me to the deck before I could strike a blow in defense; they disarmed both the Panar and me and bound our hands behind our backs. It was all done very expeditiously and quietly; the plan had been admirably worked out, and it won my approbation—anyone who can take John Carter as easily as that deserves praise.

They took us on deck, and I could not but notice that many of them still treated me with deference. Those who immediately surrounded me were all panthans. On deck, I saw both Fo-nar and Tan Hadron were prisoners.

The men surrounded us, and discussed our fate.

"Overboard with the four of them!" cried an assassin.

"Don't be a fool," said one of the panthans; we can't navigate the ship without at least one of them."

"Keep one of them, then; and throw the others over the rail—over with the dwar first!"

"No!" said another panthan; "he is a great fighting man, a good commander who led us to victory; I will fight before I will see him killed."

"And I!" shouted several others.

"What do you want to do with them, then?" demanded still another assassin. "Do you want to take them along so that we'll all have our heads lopped off at the first city we stop at where they can report us to the authorities?"

"Keep two to pilot the ship," said a man who had not spoken before; "and ground the other two, if you don't want to kill them."

Several of the assassins were still for killing us; but the others prevailed, and they had Tan Hadron bring the *Dusar* to the ground. Here, as they put us off the ship, Gor-don and I, they gave us back our weapons over the protest of several of the assassins.

As I stood there on the snow and ice of the Arctic and saw the *Dusar* rise in the air and head toward the south, I thought that it might have been kinder had they killed us.

NORTH of us rose a range of rocky hills. Their wind-swept granite summits, flecked with patches of snow and ice, showed above their snow covered slopes like the backbone of some dead monster. To the south stretched rough, snow-covered terrain as far as the eye could reach—to the north, a frozen wilderness and death; to the south, a frozen wilderness and death.

But it was the south that called me. I could struggle on until death claimed me, but I would never give up while life remained.

"I suppose we might as well be moving," I said to Gor-don, "as I started toward the south."

"Where are you going?" he asked; "only death lies in that direction for a man on foot."

"I know that," I replied; "death lies in any direction we may go."

The Panar smiled.

"Pankor lies just beyond those hills," he said. "I have hunted here many times on this side of them; we can be in Pankor in a couple of hours."

I shrugged.

"It doesn't make much difference to me," I said, "as I shall probably be killed in Pankor;" and I started off again, but this time toward the north.

"You can come into Pankor safely," said Gor-don, "but you will have to come as my slave. It is not as I would

have it, sir; but it is the only way in which you will be safe."

"I understand," I said, "and I thank you."

"We shall have to say that I took you prisoner; that the crew of my ship mutinied and grounded us," he explained.

"It is a good story, and at least founded on fact," I said. "But, tell me: will I ever be able to escape from Pankor?"

"If I get another ship, you will," he promised. "I am allowed a slave on board, and I'll take you along; the rest we shall have to leave to fate; though I can assure you that it is no easy thing to escape from Hin Abtol's navy."

"You are being very generous," I said.

"I owe you my life, sir."

Life is strange. How could I have guessed a few hours before that my life would be in the hands of one of Hin Abtol's officers, and safe? If ever a man was quickly rewarded for a good deed, it was I now for the rescuing of those poor devils from the burning ship.

Gor-don led the way with confidence over that trackless waste to a narrow gorge that split the hills. One unfamiliar with its location could have passed along the foot of the hills within a hundred yards of its mouth without ever seeing it, for its ice- and snow-covered walls blended with the surrounding snow to hide it most effectively.

It was rough going in that gorge. Snow covered broken ice and rocks, so that we were constantly stumbling and often falling. Transverse fissures crossing the gorge formed a labyrinth of corridors in which a man might be quickly lost. Gor-don told me this was the only pass through the hills, and that if an enemy ever got into it he would freeze to death before he found his way out.

WE had plodded on for about half an hour, when, at a turn, our way was blocked by one of the most terrible creatures that inhabit Mars. It was an apt, a huge, white furred creature with six limbs, four of which, short and heavy, carry it swiftly over the snow and ice; while the other two, growing forward from its shoulders on either side of its long, powerful neck, terminate in white, hairless hands, with which it seizes and holds its prey.

Its head and mouth are more nearly similar in appearance to those of a hippopotamus than to any other earthly animal, except that from the sides of the upper jawbone two mighty horns curve slightly downward toward the front.

Its two huge eyes inspire one's greatest curiosity. They extend in two vast oval patches from the center of the top of the cranium down either side of the head to below the roots of the horns, so that these weapons really protrude from the lower part of the eyes, which are composed of several thousand ocelli each.

This eye structure has always seemed remarkable to me in a beast whose haunts were on a glaring field of ice and snow. I found, upon minute examination of the eyes of several that Thuvan Dihn and I killed that time that we passed through the Carrion Caves, that each ocellus is furnished with its own lid, and that the animal can, at will, close as many of the facets of its huge eyes as it wishes. Yet I am sure that nature has thus equipped him because much of his life is spent in dark, subterranean recesses.

The moment that the creature saw us, it charged; and Gor-don and I whipped out our radium pistols simultaneously, and commenced firing. We could hear the bullets exploding in its carcass and see great chunks of flesh and bone being torn away, but still it

came on. One of my bullets found a thousand faceted eye and exploded there, tearing the eye away. For just a moment the creature hesitated and wavered; then it came on again. It was right on top of us now, and our bullets were tearing into its vitals. How it could continue to live, I cannot understand; but it did, and it reached out and seized Gor-don with its two horrible, white, hairless hands and dragged him toward its massive jaws.

I was on its blind side; and realizing that our bullets would not bring death in time to save Gor-don, I drew my long-sword; and, grasping the hilt in both hands, swung it from low behind my right shoulder and brought the keen blade down onto the beast's long neck. Just as the jaws were about to close on Gor-don, the apt's head rolled upon the icy floor of the gorge; but its mighty fingers still clung to the Panar, and I had to hack them off with my short sword before the man was freed.

"That was a close call," I said.

"Once again you have saved my life," said Gor-don; "how can I ever repay you?"

"By helping me find Llana of Gathol, if she is in Pankor," I told him.

"If she is in Pankor, I'll not only help you find her; but I'll help you get her away, if it is humanly possible to do so," he replied. "I am an officer in Hin Abtol's navy," he continued, "but I feel no loyalty toward him. He is a tyrant, hated by all; how he has been able to rule us for more than a hundred years without being found by the assassin's dagger or poison, is a miracle."

AS we talked, we continued on through the gorge; and presently came out upon a snow covered plain upon which rose one of those amazing, glass covered, hothouse cities of Barsoom's North Polar region.

"Pankor," said Gor-don; presently he turned and looked at me and commenced to laugh.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Your metal," he said; "you are wearing the insignia of a dwar in Hin Abtol's service; it might appear strange that you, a dwar, are the prisoner and slave of a padwar."

"That might be difficult to explain," I said, as I removed the insignia and threw it aside.

At the city gate, it was our good fortune to find one of Gor-don's acquaintances in command of the guard. He heard Gor-don's story with interest and permitted us to enter, paying no attention whatever to me.

Pankor was much like Kadabra, the capital city of Okar, only much smaller. Though the country around it and up to its walls was clothed in snow and ice, none lay upon the great crystal dome which roofed the entire city; and beneath the dome a pleasant, springlike atmosphere prevailed. Its avenues were covered with the sod of the mosslike ocher vegetation which clothes the dead sea bottoms of the red planet, and bordered by well kept lawns of crimson, Barsoomian grass. Along these avenues sped the noiseless traffic of light and airy ground fliers with which I had become familiar in Marentina and Kadabra long years before.

The broad tires of these unique fliers are but rubberlike gas bags filled with the eighth Barsoomian ray, or ray of propulsion—that remarkable discovery of the Martians that has made possible the great fleets of mighty airships that render the red man of the outer world supreme. It is this ray which propels the inherent and reflected light of suns and planets off into space, and when confined gives to Martian craft their airy buoyancy.

Hailing a public flier, Gor-don and I

were driven to his home, I sitting with the driver, as befitted a slave. Here he was warmly greeted by his mother, father, and sister; and I was conducted to the slaves' quarters by a servant. It was not long, however, before Gor-don sent for me; and when the servant who had brought me had departed, Gor-don explained to me that he had told his parents and his sister that I had saved his life, and that they wished to express their gratitude.

"You shall be my son's personal guard," said the father, "and we shall not look upon you here in this home as a slave. He tells me that in your own country you are a noble." Gor-don had either guessed at that, or made up the story for effect; as I certainly had told him nothing of my status at home. I wondered how much more he had told them; I did not wish too many people to know of my search for Llana. When next we were alone, I asked him; and he assured me that he had told them nothing.

"I trust them perfectly," he said, "but the affair is not mine to speak of." At least there was one decent Panar; I presume that I had come to judge them all by Hin Abtol.

Gor-don furnished me with harness and insignia which definitely marked me as a slave of his household and rendered it safe for me to go about the city, which I was anxious to do on the chance that I might pick up some word regarding Llana; for Gor-don had told me that in the market place, where slaves gathered to buy and sell for their owners, all the gossip of the city was discussed daily.

"If it has happened or is going to happen, the market place knows it, is an old saying here," he told me; and I found this to be true.

As Gor-don's bodyguard, I was permitted to wear weapons, the insignia on my harness so denoting. I was glad of this, as I feel lost without arms—much as an Earth man would feel walking down the street without his pants.

The day after we arrived, I went alone to the market place.

CHAPTER VI

Llana at Last

I GOT into conversation with a number of slaves, but I didn't learn anything of value to me; however, being there, put me in the way of learning something that was of value to me. I was talking with another slave, when we saw an officer coming through the market place, touching first one slave and then another, who immediately fell in behind him.

"If he touches you, don't ask any questions; but go along," said the slave with whom I was talking and whom I had told I was a newcomer to Pankor.

Well, the officer did tap me on the shoulder as he passed; and I fell in behind him with fifteen or twenty other slaves. He led us out of the market place and along an avenue of poorer shops, to the city wall. Here, beside a small gate, was a shed in which was a stock of apt fur suits. After we had each donned one of these, in accordance with the officer's instructions, he unlocked the small gate and led us out of the city into the bitter cold of the Arctic, where such a sight met my eyes as I hope I may never see again. On row after row of racks which extended as far as I could see hung frozen human corpses, thousands upon thousands of them hanging by their feet, swinging in the biting wind.

Each corpse was encased in ice, a transparent shroud through which their dead eyes stared pleadingly, reproachfully, accusingly, horribly. Some faces

wore frozen grins, mocking Fate with bared teeth.

The officer had us cut down twenty of the bodies, and the thought of the purpose for which they seemed obviously intended almost nauseated me. As I looked upon those endless lines of corpses hanging heads down, I was reminded of winter scenes before the butcher shops of northern cities in my native country, where the bodies of ox and bear and deer hung, frozen, for the gourmet to inspect.

It took the combined strength of two red men to lift and carry one of these ice encrusted bodies; and as the officer had tapped an odd number of slaves, I was left without a partner to carry a corpse with me.

The officer saw me standing idle, and called to me.

"Hey, you!" he cried; "don't loaf around doing nothing; drag one of them over to the gate."

I stooped and lifted one of the bodies to my shoulder, carrying it alone to the gate. I could see that the officer was astounded, for what I had done would have been an impossible feat of strength for a Martian. As a matter of fact, it was not at all remarkable that I was able to do it; because my unusually great strength, combined with the lesser gravity of Mars, made it relatively easy for me.

All the time I was carrying my grisly burden, I was thinking of the roast we had had at the meal I had eaten at Gor-don's house—and wondering! Was it possible that civilized human beings could be so depraved? It seemed incredible of such people as Gor-don and his family. His sister was a really beautiful girl. Could she—? I shuddered at the implication.

WE carried the corpses into a large building across the avenue from the little gate. Here were row upon row and tier upon tier of ersite topped tables; and when, at the officer's direction, we laid the bodies upon some of them, the place looked like a morgue.

Presently a number of men entered the room; they carried heavy knives. These are the butchers, I thought. They attached hoses to hydrants, and each one of them stood over a corpse and sprayed it with warm water, at the same time chipping away the ice with his knife.

When the first corpse was entirely released from its icy winding sheet I wanted to look away, but I couldn't—I was fascinated by the horror of it as I waited to see the butcher wield his knife; but he didn't. Instead, he kept on spraying the body with warm water, occasionally massaging it. Finally, he took a hypodermic syringe from his pocket pouch and injected something into the arm of the cadaver; then the most horrifying thing of all occurred: the corpse rolled its head to and fro and opened its eyes!

"Stand by, slaves!" commanded the officer; "some of them may be a little wild at first—be ready to seize them."

The first corpse sat up and looked around, as others of them showed signs of life. Soon they were all either sitting up or standing staring about them in a confused sort of way. Now they were each given the harness of a slave; and when a detachment of warriors came to take charge of them, we other slaves were dismissed. Now I recalled and understood that oft repeated reference of the warriors of Hin Abtol to being "frozen in." I had thought that they merely meant being confined in an Arctic city surrounded by ice and snow.

As I was leaving the building, the officer accosted me.

"Who are you, slave?" he demanded.

"I am the slave and bodyguard of

Padwar Gor-don," I replied.

"You are a very strong man," he said; "what country are you from?"

"Virginia," I replied.

"I never heard of it; where is it?"

"Just south of Maryland."

"Well, never mind—let's see how strong you are; can you lift one end of that ersite table alone?"

"I don't know."

"Try it," he ordered.

I picked up the entire table and held it above my head.

"Incredible!" exclaimed the officer. The warriors were standing looking at me in open mouthed astonishment.

"What is your name?" demanded the officer.

"Dotor Sojat."

"Very good," he said; "you may go now."

When I returned to Gor-don's home, he told me that he had become apprehensive because of my long absence.

"Where have you been all this time?" he asked.

"Thawing out corpses," I told him, laughing. "Before I saw them start coming to life, I thought you Panars ate them. Tell me; what is the idea?"

"It is a part of Hin Abtol's mad scheme to conquer all of Barsoom and make himself Jeddak of Jeddaks and Warlord of Barsoom. He has heard of the famous John Carter, who holds these titles; and he is envious. He has been at the preserving of human beings by freezing for fully a hundred years. At first it was only a plan by which he might have great numbers of slaves available at any time without the expense of feeding them while they were idle. After he heard of John Carter and the enormous wealth of Helium and several other empires, this grandiose scheme of conquest commenced taking form.

"He had to have a fleet; and as no one in Pankor knew how to build airships, he had to acquire them by trickery and theft. A few crossed the ice barrier from some of the northern cities; these were lured to land by signals of friendship and welcome; then their crews were captured and all but one or two of them frozen in. Those who were not had promised to train Panars in the handling of the ships. It has been a very slow process of acquiring a navy; but he has supplemented it by visiting several of the northern cities, pretending friendship, and then stealing a ship or two, just as he pretended friendship for Gahan of Gathol and then stole his daughter.

"His present attack on Gathol is merely a practice campaign to give his officers and warriors experience and perhaps at the same time acquire a few more ships."

"How many of those frozen men has he?" I asked.

"He has accumulated fully a million in the last hundred years," replied Gordon; "a very formidable army, if he had the ships to transport them."

ON this dying planet, the population of which has been steadily decreasing for probably a million years, an army of a million warriors would indeed be formidable; but led by Hin Abtol and officered by Panars, *two* million disloyal warriors would be no great menace to such a power as Helium.

"I am afraid Hin Abtol's dream will never come true," I said.

"I hope not. Very few Panars are in sympathy with it. Life there is easy, and we are content to be left alone and leave others alone. By the way, did you learn anything about the whereabouts of Llana of Gathol while you were away?"

"Not a thing; did you?"

"No," he replied, "but I haven't made

any direct inquiries yet. I am waiting until I can talk with some of my friends who are stationed in the palace. I do know, however, that Hin Abtol has returned from Gathol and is in his palace."

As we talked, a slave came to announce that an officer had come from Jeddak and wished to speak to Gor-don.

"Bring him here," said my master; and a moment later a gorgeously trapped man entered the room, by which time I was standing behind Gor-don's chair, as a well trained slave and bodyguard should do.

The two men greeted each other by name and title; and then the visitor said,

"You have a slave named Dotor Sojat?"

"Yes," replied Gor-don; "my personal bodyguard, here."

The officer looked at me.

"You are the slave who lifted the ersite table alone today in the resuscitating house?" he inquired.

"Yes."

He turned again to Gor-don.

"The Jeddak will honor you by accepting this slave as a gift," he said.

Gor-don bowed.

"It is a great pleasure as well as an honor to present the slave, Dotor Sojat, to my jeddak," he said; and then, as the officer looked away from him to glance again at me, Gor-don winked at me. He knew how anxious I had been to get into the palace of Hin Abtol.

Like a dutiful slave, I left the home of Gor-don, the padwar, and followed the jeddak's officer to the palace of the jeddak.

A HIGH wall encloses the grounds where stands the palace of Hin Abtol in the city of Pankor at the top of the world, and guards pace this wall night and day; at the gates are a full utan of a hundred men; and within, at the grand entrance to the palace itself, is another utan. No wonder that it has been difficult to assassinate Hin Abtol, self-styled Jeddak of Jeddaks of the North.

At one side of the palace, on an open scarlet sward, I saw something which made me start with astonishment—it was my own flier! It was the flier that Hin Abtol had stolen from me in the deserted city of Horz; and now, as I learned later, he had it on exhibition here as proof of his great courage and ability. He bragged that he had taken it singlehanded from The Warlord of Barsoom after defeating him in a duel. The fact that there could be no doubt but that it was my personal flier lent color to the story; my insignia was there for everyone to read, plain upon the bow. They must have towed it through one of the gates; and then flown it to its present resting place; as, of course, no airship could land inside Pankor's great dome.

I was left in the guardroom just inside the entrance to the palace, where some of the warriors of the guard were loafing; two of them were playing Jetan, the Martian chess game, while others played Yano. They had all risen when the officer entered the room with me; and when he left I sat down on a bench at one side, as the others seated themselves and resumed their games.

One of them looked over at me, and scowled.

"Stand up, slave!" he ordered. "Don't you know better than to sit in the presence of Panar warriors?"

"If you can prove that you are a better man than I," I said, "I'll stand." I was in no mood to take anything like that meekly; as a matter of fact, I was pretty well fed up on being a slave.

The warrior leaped to his feet.

"Oh, insolent, too!" he said; "well, I'll teach you a lesson."

"You'd better go slow there, Ul-to," warned one of his companions; "I think this fellow was sent for by the jeddak. If you muss him up, Hin Abtol may not like it."

"Well, he's got to be taught a lesson," snarled Ul-to; "if there's one thing I can't stand, it's an impudent slave," and he came toward me. I did not rise, and he grabbed me by the harness and attempted to drag me to my feet; at the same time, he struck at me.

I parried his blow, and seized hold of his harness; then I stood up and lifted him above my head. I held him there for a moment, and then I tossed him across the room.

"That will teach you," I called to him, "to be respectful to your betters."

Some of the other guardsmen were scowling at me angrily; but many were laughing at Ul-to, who now scrambled to his feet, whipped out his long-sword, and came for me. They had not yet disarmed me; and I drew mine; but before we could engage, a couple of Ul-to's companions seized him and held him. He was cursing and struggling to free himself and get at me, when the officer of the guard, evidently attracted by the disturbance, entered the room.

When he heard what had happened, he turned angrily on me.

"You ought to be flogged," he said, "for insulting and attacking a Panar warrior."

"Perhaps you would like to try to flog me," I said.

At that, he turned purple and almost jumped up and down, he was so furious. "Seize him!" he shouted to the warriors, "and give him a good beating."

THEY all started toward me, and I drew my sword. I was standing with my back to the wall, and there would have been several dead Panars scattered about that room in a few minutes if the officer who had brought me there had not come in just then.

"What's the meaning of this?" he demanded.

The guard officer explained, making me appear wholly in the wrong.

"He lies," I said to the officer; "I was attacked without provocation."

He turned to the guard officer.

"I don't know who started this," he said, "but it's a good thing for your neck that nothing happened to this man"; then he disarmed me and told me to follow him.

He led me out of the palace again and to the side of the building where my flier stood. I noticed that it was not moored, there being no danger of winds beneath that great dome; and I wished that it were out in the open so that I could fly it away if I were able to find Llana of Gathol; it would have been a Heaven sent opportunity for escape had it not been for that enclosing dome.

He took me out to the center of an expanse of well kept lawn, facing a number of people who had gathered beside the building. There were both men and women, and more were coming from the palace. At last there was a fanfare of trumpets; and the Jeddak came, accompanied by courtiers and women.

In the meantime, a large man had come out on the lawn beside me; he was a warrior wearing metal that denoted him a member of Hin Abtol's bodyguard.

"The Jeddak has heard tales of your great strength," said the officer who had brought me there, to me, "and he wishes to see a demonstration of it. Rab-zov, here, is supposed to be the strongest man in Pankor—"

"I *am* the strongest man in Pankor, sir," interrupted Rab-zov; "I am the strongest man on Barsoom."

"He must be pretty strong," I said. "What is he going to do to me?"

"You are going to wrestle to amuse the Jeddak and his court; Rab-zov will demonstrate how easily he can throw you to the ground and hold you there. Are you ready, Rab-zov?"

Rab-zov said he was ready, and the officer signed us to start. Rab-zov swaggered toward me, taking occasional quick glances at the audience to see if all were looking at him. They were; looking at him and admiring his great bulk.

"Come on, fellow!" said Rab-zov; "put up the best fight you can; I want to make it interesting for the Jeddak."

"I shall hope to make it interesting for you, Rab-zov," I said.

He laughed loudly at that.

"You won't feel so much like joking when I'm through with you," he said.

"Come on, wind bag!" I cried; "you talk too much."

HE was leaning forward, reaching for a hold, when I seized one of his wrists, turned quickly and threw him over my shoulder. I purposely let him fall hard, and he was still a little groggy when he came to his feet. I was waiting, very close; and I seized him by the harness and lifted him over my head; then I commenced to whirl with him. He was absolutely helpless; and when I thought he was befuddled enough, I carried him over and threw him down heavily in front of Hin Abtol.

"Have you no strong men in Pankor?" I asked him, and then I saw Llana of Gathol standing beside the Jeddak. Almost with the suddenness of a revelation a mad scheme came to me.

"Perhaps I had better send two men against you," said Hin Abtol, rather good-naturedly; he had evidently enjoyed the spectacle.

"Why not a swordsman?" I asked. "I am quite good with a sword," and I wanted a sword very much right then—I needed a sword to carry out my plan.

"Do you want to be killed, slave?" demanded Hin Abtol; "I have the best swordsmen in the world in my guard."

"Bring out your best, then," I said; "I may surprise him — and somebody else," and I looked straight at Llana of Gathol, and winked. Then, for the first time, she recognized me through my disguise.

"Who were you winking at?" demanded Hin Abtol, looking around.

"Something got in my eye," I said.

Hin Abtol spoke to an officer standing near him.

"Who is the best swordsman in the guard?" he asked.

"There is none better than Ul-to," replied the officer.

"Fetch him!"

So! I was to cross swords with my old friend, Ul-to. That would please him—for a few moments.

They brought Ul-to; and when he found that he was to fight me, he beamed all over.

"Now, slave," he said, "I will teach you that lesson I promised you."

"Again?" I asked.

"It will be different this time," he said.

We crossed swords.

"To the death!" I said.

"To the death, slave!" replied Ul-to.

I fought on the defensive mostly at first seeking to work my man around in the position in which I wanted him; and when I had him there, I pressed him; and he fell back. I kept backing him toward the audience, and to make him more amenable to my directions, I started carving him—just a little. I

wanted him to acquire respect for my point and my ability. Soon he was covered with blood, and I was forcing him to go wherever I wished him.

I backed him into the crowd, which fell back; and then I caught Llana's eye, and motioned her with my head to step to one side; then I pressed close to her.

"At the kill," I whispered, "run for the flier and start the engine."

I backed Ul-to away from the crowd then, and I saw Llana following, as though she was so much interested in the duel that she did not realize what she was doing.

"Now, Llana!" I whispered, and I saw her walking slowly backward toward the flier.

In order to attract the crowd's attention from Llana, I pressed Ul-to to one side with such an exhibition of swordplay as I knew would hold every eye; then I turned him around and had him almost running backward, carrying me nearer my ship.

Suddenly I heard Hin Abtol cry,

"The girl! Get her! She's gone aboard that flier!"

AS they started forward, I ran Ul-to through the heart and turned and ran for my ship. At my heels came a dozen warriors with drawn swords. The one who had started first, and who was faster than the others, overtook me just as I had to pause a moment at the side of the flier to make assurance doubly sure that she was not moored in any way. I wheeled and parried a vicious cut; my blade moved once more with the swiftness of light, and the warrior's head rolled from his shoulders.

"Let her go!" I cried to Llana, as I leaped to the deck.

As the ship rose, I hastened to the controls, and took over.

"Where are we going, John Carter?" asked Llana.

"To Gathol," I replied.

She looked up at the dome above us.

"How—?" she started, but she saw that I had turned the nose of the flier upward at an angle of forty-five degrees and opened the throttle—that was her answer.

The little ship, as sweet and fast a flier as I have ever flown, was streaking through the warm air of Pankor at tremendous speed. We both huddled close to the deck of the little cockpit—and hoped.

The flier shuddered to the terrific impact; broken glass showered in every direction—and then we were out in the cold, clear air of the Arctic.

I levelled off then, and headed for Gathol at full speed; there was danger of our freezing to death if we didn't get into a warmer climate soon, for we had no furs.

"What became of Pan Dan Chee and Jad-han?" I asked.

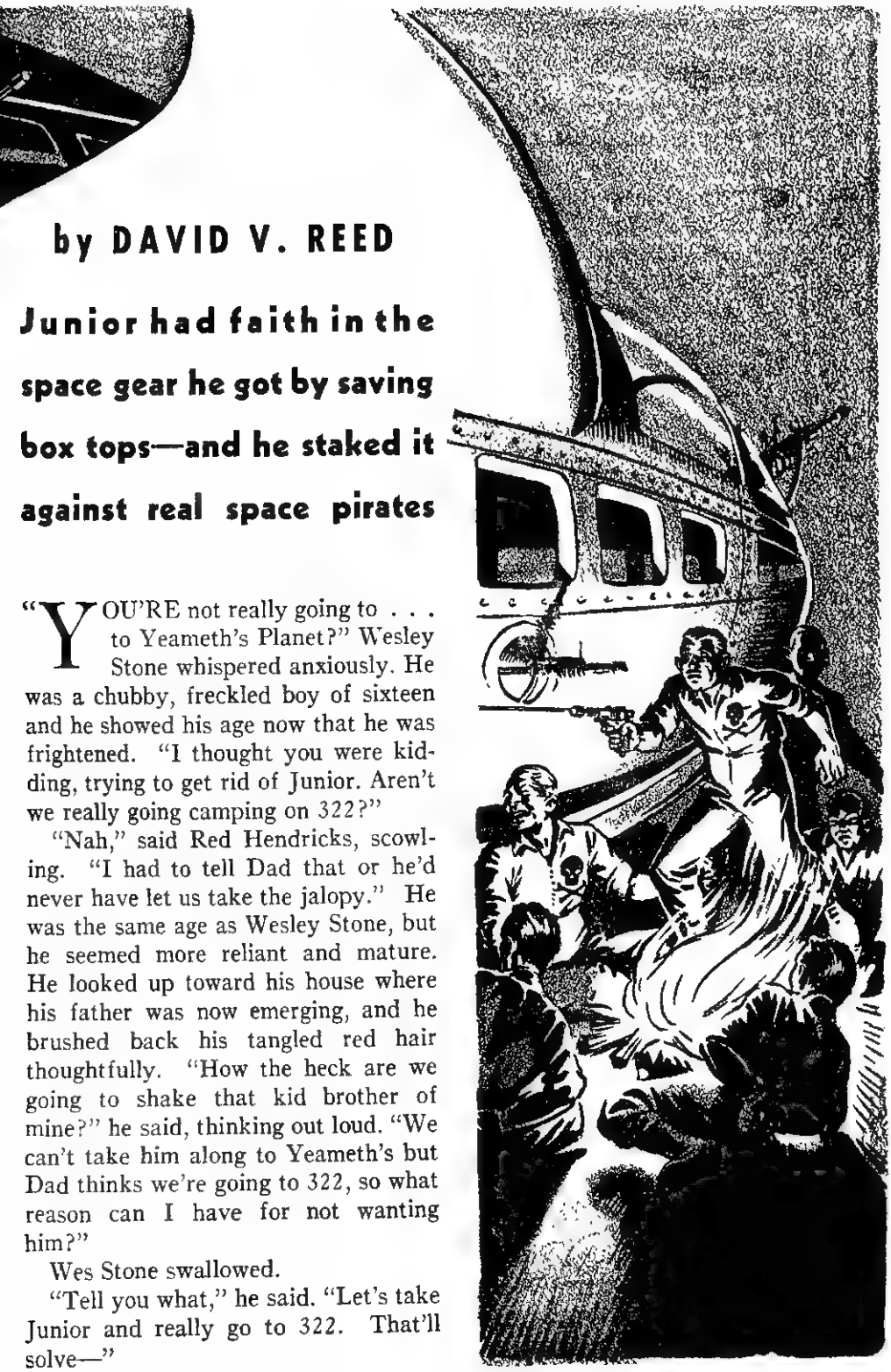
"I haven't seen them since we were all captured in Gathol," replied Llana. "Poor Pan Dan Chee; he fought for me, and he was badly wounded; I am afraid that I shall never see him again," and there were tears in her voice.

I greatly deplored the probable fate of Pan Dan Chee and Jad-han, but at least Llana of Gathol was at last safe.

LET THAT DUST ALONE

DUST, although a bothersome, drab element in our daily existence, is actually one of the most necessary things in the world. There would be no clouds but for the dust which gives vapor in the air to condense it. Water-vapor, which would constantly keep us wet and uncomfortable, is kept from bothering us by the dust in the air. And without dust, sunsets, which are broken by floating dust that takes on color, would lose most of their beauty and brilliance. Yes, indeed, we'd be in a damp and dreary state without dust.

The pirate fired but Junior ducked and was gone



by DAVID V. REED

Junior had faith in the space gear he got by saving box tops—and he staked it against real space pirates

"YOU'RE not really going to . . . to Yeameth's Planet?" Wesley Stone whispered anxiously. He was a chubby, freckled boy of sixteen and he showed his age now that he was frightened. "I thought you were kidding, trying to get rid of Junior. Aren't we really going camping on 322?"

"Nah," said Red Hendricks, scowling. "I had to tell Dad that or he'd never have let us take the jalopy." He was the same age as Wesley Stone, but he seemed more reliant and mature. He looked up toward his house where his father was now emerging, and he brushed back his tangled red hair thoughtfully. "How the heck are we going to shake that kid brother of mine?" he said, thinking out loud. "We can't take him along to Yeameth's but Dad thinks we're going to 322, so what reason can I have for not wanting him?"

Wes Stone swallowed.

"Tell you what," he said. "Let's take Junior and really go to 322. That'll solve—"

"Ah, what're you so scared of?" Red demanded. "You just keep quiet and let me handle this."

Mr. Hendricks, Red's father, came walking up to where the group of five boys were busily stowing away their equipment in the old space jalopy. The jalopy was an old Hudson Special, and in her day she had been a fine little space cruiser. Unfortunately, her day was some fifty years past, and now she was a jalopy, old and rusted, fixed with a dozen spare parts from different ships, and used only for minor errands and short hauls from Medicea to the other bodies which surrounded it. But she was space-worthy, and to boys like these, piloting and navigating a space jalopy was second nature; they were the sons of medicine farmers on Medicea, and farmers never had enough help.

Mr. Hendricks smiled as he watched the boys working.

"Looks just about ready, James," he called. "Do you think I ought to have another look at that transmission gear?"

"It's okay, Dad," said Red, injecting a trace of sadness in his voice. "We'll just have to be careful we don't make any rapid maneuvers. Freddie and Pete are going to oil it again now."

Freddie and Pete nodded soberly to Mr. Hendricks. From inside the ship, Joe Gonzaga stuck his head out.

"Hey, Red!" he called. "We're full up in here. We got no room for Junior and his junk."

"Do you see, Dad?" Red wailed suddenly. "Why do I have to take that little stinker with me everywhere I go? He just gets—"

"That'll do, James," said Mr. Hendricks. "If you want to use my old jalopy, it will have to be on my conditions. You don't seem to realize that Junior hasn't many boys of his age on Medicea, and the life of a medicine farmer isn't very interesting to youngsters. Not," he added dryly, "that it's interesting to older boys either. If you boys want to go camping on Planetoid 322—that's it, isn't it?—there's no reason why Junior shouldn't go along."

"Mr. Hendricks," said Wes Stone, suddenly, "suppose we were going to—"

"Okay, Dad!" Red broke in briskly, eying Wes murderously. "Only why does he have all that crazy junk along?"

"It is not crazy junk!" a voice from the house yelled. It was Junior Hendricks, standing on the porch with a mountain of paraphernalia on his back. He was a thin, cheery-faced boy of about twelve, his eyes sharp and bright and his voice still a piping soprano. He shifted the mountain on his back and came down to the others. "Thought I didn't know what you were saying, huh?" he demanded. He held up a cone-shaped plastic earphone in his hand. "Didn't know I had my Space Ranger sound detector attached to the ship, did you?" he said, triumphantly.

Red groaned. "There you are, Dad. See what he does? He's got all that crazy junk they give out for box tops from the breakfast foods and he's always playing Space Ranger. No privacy, no nothing."

"Oh, yah?" said Junior belligerently. "I had to send all my allowance money to get this stuff. Box tops my neck! And if you think I don't know what you're up to, about going to 322 or to—"

"Okay! *Okay!*" Red interrupted frenziedly. "You're a wonderful Space Ranger and that's not a lot of crazy toys. Only let's get going!"

"Ya-a-ahh," said Junior fiercely, still not satisfied with his victory. He began unloading his stuff, saying, "Junk, huh? Here's the Ranger's manual and the charts and the call signals, wire coils, sound detectors, space helmet,

oxygen tank, sundry space gear—"

RED HENDRICKS stood by and groaned as his younger brother calmly called off each item as he stowed them away.

"Space helmet!" he muttered to Freddie. "Thinks it's a regular space helmet for a dollar fifty and twenty box tops. That kid'll drive me wild yet!"

At length, when Junior had finished and the boys were climbing into the jalopy, Mr. Hendricks said to Red:

"Now, James, there isn't something on your mind, is there? I mean, you haven't any other plans aside from going to Planetoid 322? Because if you have—"

"Who, me?" said Red innocently.

Mr. Hendricks frowned.

"I'm sure there's something going on here. All this fuss . . ." He hesitated, then smiled. "All right, boys. Be careful with your navigating; don't do anything wild and have a good time. And bring the jalopy back in one piece—it's still pretty valuable around the farm." He shook hands with Red as man to man and backed away. Half a dozen voices chorused their goodbyes and were suddenly shut off as the space ports snapped into place.

The jalopy's under jets coughed, took hold, and roared. In a moment they blasted out and the jalopy shot up in a rush of air and flame, out into the void.

So began the camping trip to Planetoid 322. Only it wasn't 322 they were going to; it was Yeameth's Planet, better known as Dead Man's Body, and an excellent reason for Wesley Stone's anxiety. Had the other boys foreseen what was coming, Wes would not have been alone in his anxiety. At least ten other people would have shared it with him . . ."

IN the immediate vicinity of Medicea there were several other medicine planets, and farther away, there were small groups of minor bodies. All in all, it was a well populated section of the System, with its juncture of trade routes, its vast medicine crops and its nearby—some million and a half miles—Granatta spaceports. Life in this part of the System was orderly and secure and pleasant, and settlers from Earth had been coming here for generations, bring up their families, sometimes going back to Earth, more often staying on.

Like Red and Junior, the other boys, Freddie Walters, Petey Micheals, Wes Stone and Joe Gonzaga, came from the homes of well-to-do medicine farmers. They had grown up on Medicea together, playing their own sports, having their own pastimes. In another part of the System it would probably have shocked people to hear that lads of sixteen were allowed to navigate and pilot a space ship; here it was normal, usual.

Now the boys were all seated, staring out of the portholes into the void, watching the great sun Osiris painting the smaller bodies with its light. Everywhere else it was dark, from the twilight near the sun to the black of the outer void. And Planetoid 322 was not more than an hour or two distant. Except—

"Red," said Wes Stone quietly. "Are we sure enough going to that old Yeameth's Planet?"

"Sure enough," said Red, at the controls. He looked up at Wes. "Now what's the sense of going to 322? We know that place inside out, but we've never been to Yeameth's. Don't you want to see all those deep craters and stuff? Think of the games we could play there, and all the wrecks. We might even find something valuable."

"But all those stories about it being

haunted . . ."

"Hooey," Pete interrupted. "They just tell that to us kids so we won't go out that far. There's nothing there, just an old deserted planet with wrecks on it."

"So what are we going there for?" demanded Wes.

"Listen," said Joe, "you don't know how lucky we are, living so near to Yeameth's. Every other fellow in the System calls it Dead Man's Body, and they'd give anything to see it. Why, you don't seem to realize that that's the place where the last of the space pirates were captured! Think of the battles that went on there for years! Think of all the famous murderers who hid there. We might even find treasure somewhere!"

Wes stopped arguing. It was no use. He busied himself with a chain he was whittling and was quiet. In another corner, Freddie and Red were playing checkers. Joe and Pete were at the controls, and Junior was monkeying around with his junk. Outside it was now completely dark, save for the occasional light of a planet far off.

Suddenly Junior cried out.

"Hey, fellers! There's another ship in the vicinity!"

Startled, the others looked up. From the control board, Pete called:

"You're nuts. I can't find any on the board."

"That!" Junior said contemptuously. "I say there's a ship. I found it with my electrosight."

"So what?" said Red, wearily. "That damn toy. So what?"

"So why can't we see it?" Junior demanded. "Why doesn't it signal us or leave a trail on the board? Why hasn't it got navigating lights? What's it hiding for?"

"Listen, Junior," said Red, "if all this talk about Dead Man's Body has you scared, you can jump out right now, because we're not turning back. You knew we were going. You had that damn sound gadget on us."

"Who said I want to turn back?" said Junior, jutting out his chin. "All I say is we ought to investigate. Look at these!" He laid down a sheaf of posters on the checkerboard. They had pictures of men on them, together with specifications and descriptions, and all were headed, *"Men Wanted by the Interplanetary Patrol."*

RED glanced at them and joined the others in laughing. He handed them back, and now he looked serious.

"I don't want you butting in anymore, you pest," he said. "If you can't forget that breakfast food Space Rangers outfit, at least keep it quiet. Get me?"

"Take a look through the electrosight," said Junior. "Go on, I dare you." He held out the crudely made instrument to his brother.

Red took the long handle of the instrument and stepped to one of the ports. Holding it up to one eye, he swept the void with it for a long minute. Then he sighed in disgust.

"I'm going to tie you down," he said at length. "There isn't even a planetoid in sight."

Junior reached up and wrenched the instrument away. Then, standing on tiptoe, he peered through the porthole.

"Must have a power curtain," he announced. "Made itself invisible, and that means it's painted black with absorber rays." He looked significantly at the others. "No ship that isn't up to something would do that!" Before Red could grab him, he had ducked and picked up an oblong black board which he now waved triumphantly. "Look at this!" he shrilled. "I told you!"

Freddie reached over and took the board.

"What's this?" he said.

"It's a magnetic detector. Look." Junior's small fingers pointed to a wavering white line that was moving erratically on the black surface of the board, forming itself out of nothing, just a white line that was darting about. "That's better than your control board," said Junior. "It shows that there's moving metal within five hundred miles."

"Hmmm," said Red. Joe came aft from the controls, and he and Wes watched the white line moving. "Think we might have a look?" said Red.

It was so quiet they could hear every part of the jalopy creaking as it sped along. Red was running a hand through his hair, the way he always did when he was doubtful and Joe cracked his knuckles. Finally Wes said:

"Sure. Let's have a look."

Red went forward and took the controls.

"Junior," he said. "Get that crazy thing of yours and tell me where to go." He added, "Where in the name of blazes does he get that stuff?"

But Junior, erect and proud, stood beside his older brother and called,

"Swing point 2.55. Steady ahead. Now over 11."

"How does he know all those things?" Joe whispered.

Pete grinned, winked, and whispered,

"Space Rangers."

"Well," said Red. "Now what?"

"One minute," said Junior sternly. "Swing again. 8 over 2.55. Hold back to over 11."

Minutes passed. Suddenly the white line on the oblong board stopped moving, stopped being. Junior frowned.

"They've found out we're tailing them," he said. "Must have an anti-magnetic inductor."

Red looked up.

"Are you kidding?" he said slowly.

"No!" Junior cried. "Don't you understand? They're trying to establish a blind spot and hide in it. There's only one cure—swing it to 77.77 and again 77.77."

"What?" three of the boys yelled together, in astonishment.

Red gritted his teeth.

"Okay, fellows," he said. "Get into the harness. I'm going to try it."

THERE was no sense arguing when Red gritted his teeth that way. It made him look like the pictures of Captain Spur in the old movies and it meant he was serious. Reluctantly, they took their emergency places and strapped themselves in. They had stopped talking.

"Okay," said Red. Suddenly the little jalopy began spinning end over end in wild gyrations that kept dislocating the ship's gravity. It was a wild maneuver that would upset any charting of their course as they swung about wildly in their own designed arc.

Over the rattling and straining of the ship, over the grunting of the boys as they struggled to breathe, Junior kept squealing in his soprano voice,

"Over 77.77. Hold it, now change to—"

With a growl and a grating roar forward the ship suddenly halted in its movement and a furious whistling noise set up.

"The transmission gear!" Red shouted. All at once the whistling stopped and it was very quiet. Red stood up in the stationary ship and looked at Junior.

"I can't find 'em," said Junior quietly. "They must have an automatic charter. That way they would just stop until we did."

"Do you know what you've done?" said Red, even more quietly. "You broke the transmission with that maneuver." He took a step toward his brother. "I don't believe there ever was a ship," he said, his voice growing louder. "I don't believe you ever could have found one with those box-tops-gadgets if there was one." His voice was now very loud indeed. "And now, with your crazy ideas, we're stalled here until we fix that transmission. If you planned this to stop us from going to Yeameth's—"

With a quick movement he lunged for Junior, but Junior had ducked just in time and come out behind the control room doors. He ran down the companionway and locked himself into the luggage compartment, staring at the others through the tiny window. They could barely hear his voice.

"Fellers," he was saying, "fellers, I didn't do it on purpose . . . There really was a ship . . ." A tear rolled down his cheek and his voice choked up. "Those things aren't . . . just . . . crazy . . . gadgets . . . honest . . ." Now he really seemed to be crying in earnest, and in a moment his face disappeared from the window.

"Oh, that pest," Red groaned. "It'll take us hours to fix this."

IT was nearing twilight on Yeameth's Planet when the little jalopy landed softly on the grey earth. Off to the east the coppery sun was vanishing and heavy clouds of moisture hung low in the sky. But even with a good part of their first day wasted, there was no checking the high spirits of the group of boys as they tumbled joyously out of the ship and stretched. Even Junior Hendricks had been forgiven, and he stood now, his bright eyes keen and interested, though he was chastened.

"Look at that hill!" said Joe, pointing to an uneven, jutting pile of boulders and earth. "Bet that's where some I.P. ship blasted off."

"Come on," said Freddie. "Let's explore a little before it's too dark! It doesn't look so gloomy to me."

"We ought to make a fire first," Pete said, "so if we get too far away, we'll have some kind of a landmark to go by." He went back to the ship and came out with a long, condensed heat-tube, but before he could set it down, Junior had a little fire going already, eating into several bits of brush and wood he had gathered.

"How did you make that fire so fast?" Wes asked in surprise.

Junior held up his hands, showing a few little sticks in them.

"These are called matches," he said. "They used to use them long ago, and they come in handy all the time. Regulation equipment for Rangers."

"Didn't I tell you to shut up about those Rangers?" said Red. "Here, give me those." He took the matches and examined them. "I know what they are," he said. "They're impregnated with sulphur or something, and they light with friction. They're not safe. Put them away."

Junior scowled.

"You know everything, huh?" he said. But he put them away and no more was heard from him until the fire was blazing on the prepared fuel the boys had brought. Then, ready to go exploring, Junior put a heavy kit around his waist, trying to make it look inconspicuous. In answer to Pete's question he said,

"Just some of that junk. I have to carry it. Rules for the Rangers. Be prepared stuff." His brother Red, hearing this, winced and said nothing as he led the way over the hillock nearby.

It was not only because of its history

that Yeameth's Planet deserved the name Dead Man's Body; it looked like the symbol of death itself. The sun, now a bloody red, cast deep shadows into the thousand scars and fissures that marked the face of the planet, and each scar was the mark of a one-time duel to the end. Here, in the earlier days of this section of the System, the scum of a universe had gathered, finding strength in their union and in their refuge. And here, year after year, the I.P. ships had come after them, until at last a military armada, in a battle that had lasted days, had left Yeameth's a land of empty death.

"Gosh," said Wes, standing on the hill and looking around, "look at that!" But he hadn't needed to call the others' attention to the lurid scene. On the other side of the hill was the beginning of a deep valley that had been carved out by the destructive energies of great battle wagons. Jagged peaks and caverns were everywhere, and in all the cursed valley there was not even a weed. Not a sign of any life at all.

And down in the bottom of the valley, and strewing its sides, were the skeletons of dozens of old ships. They were some of the remains of the pirate ships, the outlaw craft that had met their end through the vast battles. Now they lay like corpses with their bones open, for in the early days, men had come from the entire vicinity to take away whatever was valuable, until skeletons were left . . .

IN silence, the boys stood regarding the scene—until Junior piped up,

"Well, what're we waiting for? Let's go down and see if we can identify any of the ships. This place is known as The Pit."

It wasn't until then that the general reluctance to advance farther into the gloomy valley became evident, but since it was Junior who had expressed what amounted to a challenge, it had to be met.

Joe scratched his head and said, dubiously,

"I guess we might as well go down, huh?"

"Sure," said Red. He turned to his younger brother. "So you're going to tell us that you know all these ships, huh?" he said sarcastically. "And everything else about them too, I bet?"

"Anything you want to know," said Junior cheerfully. "Of course, it's easier to tell you some of the things about them than to identify any one ship, because they all have the same characteristics. We Space Rangers know all—"

"Shut up!" Red snapped. "Once and for all, I'm going to see what you know. Come on down there and don't fall behind." And immediately, Red started down the precipitous sides of the valley without waiting. In an instant, Junior was behind him and the others followed.

Halfway down the valley, Junior passed his older brother, to the latter's hardly concealed astonishment. Red had been climbing down as any boy would, but not Junior. Junior had turned around until he was facing the sides of the valley, and going down backward, as it were. He was half falling down and half climbing, and he kept himself from going too fast by staying on all fours. On his hands Junior wore thick gloves of spun metal, and with these he kept gripping jagged rocks and metal without feeling anything. And so, backwards on all fours, he scurried down the valley far ahead of the others, and was waiting for them when they too came to the bottom.

"For the love of Pete, Junior," said Joe, "where did you learn that kind of climbing?"

"That was the Ranger's crawl," Junior said, nonchalantly. "Got to have gloves which you can get for thirty box-tops and—" But just then Junior caught the look in Red's eye and he didn't bother finishing.

THEY went forward among the piles of rusting metal. The sun was almost gone now, and in the valley there was darkness. Now each of the boys produced a small glowtube, and looking like a group of fireflies, they poked about the ruins.

Before a huge wreck that was cut into three sections, Junior paused and began to scrape at the hull. The others watched him with ill-concealed curiosity.

"I think," said Junior, in a judicious, high voice, "that this is the *Skydagger,* once the flagship of Shawn, the Bloody Admiral."

"Hah!" Freddie laughed suddenly. "It can't be, because Shawn never was shot down. He landed his ship and escaped."

"Ah," said Junior, disgustedly, "you smell. I didn't say it was shot down. This ship wasn't shot down. If it had been, it would be a twisted, melted hull, like that one over there." He pointed to a nearby silhouetted wreck. "These ships are about the same age as my Dad's jalopy, which means they were all made with that imperfect magnesium alloy. If any heat ray hit them a solid blow, they usually went up in flames like torches or flares, just like a real magnesium flare, and—"

"Can that stuff," said Red, gloating. "What we want to know is how do you know *this* is the *Skydagger,* if they're so much alike?"

"Okay," said Junior, flashing his glowtube over the hull. "See the way the ship's been cut up with machine saws? That means that someone wanted to get at her without setting fire to her, so they couldn't use heat torches. That's why they used saws. Shawn wasn't shot down, and when he left his ship intact, they wanted to take out the loot he had left in her, and the instruments and machines, so they had to cut her up. And here," he held up his hands, "I scraped off some finish. Notice that it's light green, not black like the others. That's because Shawn never camouflaged his ship. Any more questions?"

In the silence, Red said sullenly,

"You make me sick."

"Well," said Junior, slowly, "I can't help it if I got a merit badge in outlaw history from the Rangers. I know—"

"Who asked you?" Red turned on him. "You be quiet, squirt!"

"Hey!" Pete shouted from a few hundred feet away, where he had wandered. "Hey—come here—quick!" There was urgency in his voice. Immediately the group scrambled towards where Pete was flashing his glowtube. When they had all come to him, Pete said,

"Look at this!" and he quickly flashed his light on the wreck next to him.

Only it wasn't a wreck at all! It was a slender, sleek ship, in a lusterless black finish, and there wasn't a mark on it. It might have landed there a minute before. There were no lights showing from within it, and no sign of life about it.

"What do you think?" said Pete, excitedly. "I found it! It's a deserted ship and I'm going to claim it!"

"What do you mean *you're* going to claim it?" said Joe in anger. "I suppose we don't come in on this, huh? We're all partners in it."

"That's what I say!" Red exclaimed, "We're all partners!"

"How about the people who landed

it?" said Junior quietly. "Maybe they won't like the idea?" He was stopping on all fours and running a hand along the bow. He stood up and added, "This ship landed a little while ago. The bow is still warm where it heated up from friction with the ground in landing."

"What?" five voices cried together.

"Yep," said Junior. He played his glowtube back from the stern of the ship. "See that? That's where the ship came through." His light pointed out a pathway that had been carved through the wreckage of other ships, indicating clearly that this ship had had to plow through them to come to its resting place.

THERE was silence for a minute. The little glowtubes flashed about in alarm, lighting up the entire vicinity. Presently, Red said in a whisper,

"What do you suppose is up, huh?"

"Maybe," said Wes, "our folks found out where we were going and sent someone after us."

"Couldn't be," said Junior. "Why would they land here? Anyone who lands here is trying to hide. And the black finish . . ." He looked at each of them and added, "I think it's a pirate craft!" in excitement.

"Shut up, you crazy kid!" said Red. "There aren't any more left."

"Is that so?" said Junior, defiantly. "I suppose those posters I showed you from the Space Rangers—"

"You and those stupid Rangers!" Joe sniffed.

"Okay," said Junior. "Let's find out!"

"I say we ought to be getting back," said Freddie. "I'm hungry."

"You're scared," said Junior calmly. "Let's try to get into this old ship and see what's what." He flashed his light over the hull until he found the thin lines that marked the ports. It was securely fastened. "Anybody got an idea how to break in?" Junior called.

"Listen, you," said Red. "If this belongs to anyone, we'd have a lot of trouble if we broke in. And if . . . if . . ." he hesitated, "if it does belong to some . . . uh . . . somebody else, we ought to get out of here. I'm going. We can come back and look it over in the morning."

"Maybe it'll be gone in the morning," Junior said.

"That's okay with me!" said Pete. "Come *on!*"

"Go ahead," said Junior. "I'm staying a while."

"Like hell," said Red, vehemently. "Dad told me to take care of you."

"Oh yeah," said Junior, grinning. "Well, stick around. Of course, if you're scared, I'll take care of *you.*" He took off the kit that was fastened around his belt. "Won't take more than a few minutes."

"I'm hungry!" Freddie shouted suddenly. "Let's get out of here!"

But Junior had disappeared around the other side of the ship, calling,

"Go ahead. I'll be right behind you."

"Changed your mind already?" said Red, sarcastically. "You bluff!"

The five of them were back above the valley by the time they saw Junior's glowtube moving among the wrecks, showing that he had started back.

"There he comes," said Joe. "What do you suppose he was doing?"

"How do I know?" Red snapped. "He's always doing crazy things."

"Well," said Wes, quietly, "all I got to say is that Junior certainly knows a lot of things."

"Yeah?" Red said. "Don't let him hear you saying that. He's hard enough to live with now." Presently, watching the glowtube advance, Red added, "All he knows is that useless junk from those box-tops."

In a few minutes Junior came scrambling up the valley sides on all fours.

"Thanks for waiting, kids," he said. He stood up and unravelled several thin strands of wire in his hands. "Know what I did?" he said brightly. "I attached my sound detectors to the hull of that ship. Now if there's anyone in it, I'll be able to hear what they say."

"Is that what the wires are for?" Wes asked.

"No," said Junior. "The sound detectors are wireless. First I was going to use these wires for something else, but then I decided to save them. They're too expensive. A hundred boxtops and forty-nine cents, for a thousand feet of Hercules cable."

"Okay, mastermind, okay!" said Red. "Let's be going. There's the fire over to the left. I guess we're all hungry by now."

AROUND the fire, gradually the high spirits of the group returned. It was only natural, for they were all young and this was a holiday. They spoke of the black ship for awhile, and then as if by mutual consent, they dropped the subject with a few joking conjectures and spoke of their plans for the next day. Only Wes Stone thought they might indeed leave the next day and go to 322, and only Junior mentioned the ship in the valley, eating with his earphones on, looking ridiculous.

After they had eaten, they played one or two games in the open, never venturing too far from the firelight in spite of their protestations, and once again it became evident that they couldn't dismiss their thoughts, that their minds returned again and again to the mystery and left them a little afraid, wondering.

All at once, Junior let out a yell.

"I've got something! They're talking!"

In an instant the whole group had gathered around him, their faces betraying anxiety, but saying nothing as Junior listened intently.

"They saw the fire!" Junior whispered. "They were here and they looked through the jalopy! Must have been while we were in the valley," he said, parenthetically. "They're saying something about coming back and—"

"Give me t h o s e earphones!" said Red, savagely taking off the set. He clamped them down on his head, scowling. After a moment he said, "I don't hear anything." He listened a g a i n. "Not a word." Slowly he looked at Junior and his face turned red. "Listen, you squirt," he said, "if this is your idea of a joke . . ."

"Maybe," said J u n i o r, anxiously, "you hurt the phones by tearing them off so quickly. They aren't real ones, you know. You have to be real careful with them."

Red kept listening, his face blank. Then he took the earphones off.

"That settles it," he said with finality. "First you almost ruin the jalopy with those crazy maneuvers, and now you try to scare us all with more nonsense. You're going to be locked in the jalopy." He got up and grabbed Junior.

"You can't lock me in," Junior said defiantly. "I'll pick the lock and come out."

"If you do," said Red, "I'll give you a beating that'll hurt the whole damn organization of Space Rangers. Now get in that ship!"

"Give me my earphones," said Junior, biting his underlip. "I'm going to fix them. And I'll get even, wait and see."

Slowly, he shuffled back to the jalopy and went inside without looking back, t h e earphones hanging limply in one hand.

"I got to admit," said Freddie, "I'm getting disgusted with that pesky kid."

"Always showing off," said Red. "This is the last time I'll ever take him along. My Dad just doesn't understand that nuisance."

IT was perhaps fifteen minutes later that four men came out of the darkness from four different directions, and each one was holding a small electric gun in his hand. They were big men, unshaven, their faces surly and their eyes watchful and darting. They came within the light of the fire, standing half in darkness, looking at the five boys. Then one of them, a man with a hooked nose, said:

"You kids alone?" in a subdued, harsh voice.

"Yes," said Joe, wide-eyed. "We're just camping here. We ain't doing nothing." The others nodded quickly.

"Well, whadd'ye know?" said the man, looking at his companions and breaking into a cruel smile. "Just a pack of kids out camping."

"I ain't so sure," said one of the men, barely moving his lips. "Are you the ones that followed us in that ship a couple hours ago?"

Wes burst out:

"We weren't following anybody. Junior said there was another ship near us that wasn't showing lights . . . so we . . . we . . . sort of thought it might be . . . pirates—or something."

"Certainly followed us fine," said the second man, ominously.

Suddenly Freddie began to sob.

"We ain't doing anything."

The first man looked sharply at his three companions and he smiled again.

"Whadd'ye cryin' for?" he said, trying to be pleasant. "We ain't goin' to hurt you. We're just a couple of inspectors for the Universal Medicine Company. We're makin' the rounds of the small planetoids lookin' over the crops." He put away his gun. "Sure," he said, showing his teeth, "we're just inspectors. We ducked you because we thought *you* might be pirates or somethin', seein' as how we was close to this here Yeameth's. One of the tubes on our ship is blasted out and we had to land here for repairs."

"Yeah," said another, a thin man with small eyes, laughing. "We couldn't control the ship good, so we wound up down in the valley. Then we seen this fire an' we thought maybe we go up and take a look."

"Gee, Mister," said Pete, "you sure scared us. Maybe we can help you. Red here can fix anything, can't you, Red?"

Red got up silently, looking at the four men.

"Sure," he said, quietly, "I can fix anything."

"We don't need no help," said the one with the thin lips. "We got a couple friends fixin' her up right now. Soon's the tubes back in, we're gettin' out of here. How about you kids—stayin' long?"

From out of nowhere, Junior appeared, standing close to the hull of the jalopy, the earphones in one hand and the kit on his belt.

"You might fool them," Junior cried, "but I'm wise to you. I know who you are. You held up that armored ship off Granatta! I heard your pals talking down there!" He pointed at them defiantly.

"Get that kid!" cried one of the men, pulling out his gun. He jumped toward Junior together with two of the others, but Junior had already vanished around the ship and was gone. Three of the men ran after him while the fourth stood near the fire with his gun out. Suddenly the thunder of an electric gun hammered out again and again not far away, and then once again. The darkness split into blue flashes with each blow.

"Just campin' here, hey?" said the man near the fire. His eyes were little slits as he stared at the frightened group of boys.

IN a few minutes the three men returned, but Junior was not with them. So terrified that he didn't know what he was doing, Red got up and yelled,

"You killed him! You killed my brother, you dirty—"

One of the three whirled on him with an oath.

"Shut up, kid! Nobody's killed him." He spoke to the fourth. "We lost him," he said, seeming a bit bewildered. "We followed him to the valley an' we almost had our mitts on him, but you shoulda seen him go down . . . like an animal or somethin'." He looked around. "We gotta get out of here," he said. "We gotta get out before somethin' happens. How did that kid know who we was?"

"Just a minute," said the man with the small eyes, turning to Wes, who was crying quietly. "You kids got a communicator in that bus?" he asked. "Answer me!" he shouted.

Wes shook his head. "No," he sobbed, "no."

"Okay," said Small-Eyes, turning to the men in satisfaction. "We got to make sure we get a good start on these kids, before they get a chance to start yapping their heads off—"

"I'll take care of that," said one of the men.

"No!" Small-Eyes said, sharply. "We ain't gettin' mixed up in no kid murders, see? Hi-jackin' comes easy, but the I.P. would follow us for the next twenty years for knockin' off a kid." He looked at his companions coldly. "I don't want to see no more gun-play, get me? Then he turned to Red. "You said you could fix anything, didn't you? How long would it take you to fix a bent blaster?"

"Two hours," Red blurted out.

Small-Eyes smiled mirthlessly.

"Too scared to lie, huh? Okay, we'll knock out every damn one of them blasters, and they'll keep you a couple of days." To his friends he said softly, "Brain-work, see? Now get these kids down to the ship and keep an eye on them. I'll be down as soon as I take care of the blasters here. And keep a lookout for that little one. He's too dumb to be scared."

IT was some time before Small-Eyes returned to where the black ship was hidden in the wreckage-strewn valley. Two men were seated near the group of boys, and through one of the open ports, the fitful blue glare of torches shone past huddled bodies that labored over the ship's tubes. In the night, the air had become quite cold, and the boys were shivering quietly, afraid to talk. Once Freddie had whispered something and immediately been slapped by one of the men.

When Small-Eyes came back, he spoke to his companions in a low voice, then he came out again and faced the boys, his manner somehow nervous and tense.

"You!" he spat out, pointing to Red. "That little one is your brother, ain't he?"

Red nodded his head.

"Okay. I got one question to ask and I want a straight answer," said Small-Eyes, tersely. "While I was in your jalopy, the kid sneaked in and grabbed a black leather bag off the floor. What I want to know," he said, softly, "is—what was in that bag?"

Red was so startled by the information that he stuttered.

"N—N—Nothing bbbut some toys and things . . . I'm not sure—"

A low, stacatto whining sound interrupted him. It seemed to be ringing

from nowhere, filling the air with a pulsing beat, a pattern of rhythmic sound. Instantly the men came running out of the ship in alarm. One of them cried,

"Who's popping off with that sonic gun?"

"Quiet!" barked Small-Eyes, listening. Then he said, in a low savage voice, "It's a sonic gun, hittin' against our hull. Listen to it—it's the I.P. distress signal!"

Clearly, distinctly, the signals were sounding out. With dangerous precision, vibrations being set off from the special alloy of the black ship, which formed a perfect sounding board.

"It's that kid," said Small-Eyes. "These signals might reach anywhere!" He whirled to Red. "Toys, huh?" he said, fiercely, and as Red answered, "Sure, it's a toy sonic gun," Small-Eyes smashed him across the mouth.

He started back to the ship.

"No use lookin' for that kid," he said, quickly. "Let's see if we can get out of here now."

In a few moments, hurried preparations for the blast-off were being made. The first moment the watchful eyes were removed, first Red, then Joe and Pete, and then Freddie and Wes, slipped off into the darkness, watching the ship get ready to leave.

"Where's Junior?" Joe whispered fearfully. "We ought to find him. If they catch him . . ."

"No worse than when I catch him," Red said. He was so mad he was almost crying. "I knew they were up to something too, but that damn kid . . . They might have killed him, or one of us . . ."

But the ship was really leaving. The hatches and portholes were being closed down and the after jets were starting to bubble. In a moment . . .

And then, in the weird glow of the jets, the boys saw a small form appear out of the darkness, huddle near the jet, run on to the next and the next, stooping before each a second. Then the form disappeared into the darkness again.

"That was Junior!" Red cried. "What—"

His voice was drowned out by the roar of the blasters as the ship tuned up finally. A thunderous roar, a streak of flame and the black ship shot up into the heavens. Instantly, the ground trembled and it seemed as if everything in the valley had moved after the ship. And then—the ship seemed to hang in the air an instant—*and fell back!*

Stern first, as if some mighty hand had reached up and pulled the ship back, it crashed down to earth with such a jarring roar that the impact knocked the boys off their feet.

MOMENTS passed, and the ship's ports opened and men staggered out. They lay down on the ground, gasping for breath, trying to recover from the shock of their crash. Then one of them got up and began to look at the ship. Soon the others were with him, all of them examining something they seemed to have found.

Just at that time, the whining signals started up again, sounding off the hull of the black ship! Someone swore, and a moment later, all the glowtubes in the group were doused, and total darkness returned.

"Let's get out of here," said Pete. "If they catch us again—"

But they were too late, and Pete's voice had given them away, for two glowtubes snapped on very close to them and a boot buried itself into Freddie's side.

"Come on, you kids," a voice snarled. "Down to the ship."

That was why they had doused their lights—to hunt them down in the dark.

For what?

When they came to the ship, they saw the other men holding some thin lines of cable lengths. Shreds still hung attached to the framework of the blaster jets, and other sections were scattered about. But in Small-Eyes' hands was something else. He held it up and waited until all had seen it. Then he spoke with restrained fury.

"This is the last chance I'm givin' you kids to go home alive," he began. "Which one of you knows what this thing is?"

"We didn't do it!" Wes cried out. "That's a sound detector. Junior put it on."

"A what?" said Small-Eyes.

"A sound detector," said Pete, quietly. "It's a kind of gadget that radios sounds when it's attached to metal, like on the ship."

Small-Eyes hesitated.

"Yeah," he said, at length, "that explains how the kid found out who we was. Yeah . . ." The signals were still spattering off the ship, and Small-Eyes said to Red, "You want to see your kid brother alive again?"

"He's just a baby," said Red. "He doesn't know what he's doing."

"He doesn't, huh?" snarled Small-Eyes. "What made that ship dive back? What's he signaling for? Okay." His black little eyes gleamed wickedly in the light of the glowtube. "Okay. I can play the game with him. C'mere, you."

Red stood close to Small-Eyes. The other boys were off a few feet, and around them all were the rest of the men.

"Lights out," said Small-Eyes, just as he attached the little gadget to the hull again and covered it over with his hand. "Now," he said, "when I uncover this, I want you to tell your brother that we're locked in the ship, and it's safe for him to come out. Tell him you got us prisoners—that's what he's after, that crazy brat. Get him to come out and show his nose here so's we can get our hands on him."

"No," said Red.

"I don't want to have a lay you out," said Small-Eyes. "I ain't goin' to hurt him. We got to find out what made the ship crash."

"I won't do it," said Red.

SMALL-EYES hesitated momentarily, then walked over to Wes, grabbed him by the arm and brought him back close to Red.

"All right," said Small-Eyes. "The only one we want is that little one. It ain't right to make these others pay." Without another word, he brought his hand down on Wes's face once, twice.

"I won't do it!" Wes screamed. "I won't! I won't!"

There was fear in the darkness, and the sounds of the blows were physical torture. Small-Eyes smashed Wes again and said quietly, to Red,

"You gonna let me kill this guy to save your brother?"

"Don't say anything!" Wes cried. "I don't care what he does!"

A heavy hand fell over his mouth and only his sobs were heard. Red turned away and his shoulders shook, and with each blow he winched in pain greater than if he had borne the blows. Again and again and again, until Wes's sobs were great, pain-wracked sounds . . .

"Stop it," Red whispered. "Stop hitting him. I'll do what you say, only stop hitting him."

Small-Eyes let Wes go, and the boy fell to the ground.

"Never mind him," said Small-Eyes. "Now talk into this thing." He gripped Red's arm, and uncovered the little toy instrument.

"Junior," said Red, "Junior, if you're

listening, come down to the ship in the valley right away. This is Red. We've got them locked in their ship. Stop the signals and come right away."

"Say it again," said Small-Eyes. "Maybe he didn't hear."

At that instant, the signals that had been whining off the hull of the black ship ceased. The message had been heard, and Junior would be coming. Now a hush fell over everyone, an expectant silence. Red helped Wes to his feet and brought him over to the others. The minutes passed . . .

Then, out of the darkness, a thin, high voice called,

"Here I am, Red! Hey, fellers!" They could hear his running footsteps on the ground—and all at once half a dozen glowtubes snapped on!

There, in the center of a circle of light Junior stood not ten feet away, grimy, greasy, covered with cuts. Long coils of cable were wound over his shoulder and the kit was at his side. He jumped when the lights went on, then tried to stare through them.

"Hey," he called in his tired soprano, "put them out. I can't see you."

A moment later, he understood, for on three sides the men had converged and caught him. Spluttering, half choked for breath, they set him down in front of Small-Eyes. Junior turned around to his brother in sarcasm.

"So you had them prisoner, huh?" he cried.

Small-Eyes whipped him around again. His voice, when he spoke, had gone quite dead, empty of all emotion except incredulity. He couldn't believe that it was this young child behind it all.

"What'd you do with that cable?" he said. "How'd you crash the ship?" He kept looking at Junior in confusion. "What d'you think you're doing?" he said. "Didn't you want to let us go and leave you alone?"

Junior shook his head.

"I'm going to catch you for the I.P. men," he said gravely. "There's a reward out for your gang; I found a poster notice about you. You're worth a lot of money to me."

SMALL-EYES looked at his companions.

"Listen to him!" he cried, almost in admiration. "He's going to catch us for the I.P.!"

"Yep," said Junior. "That's why I tied all those cables from your ship to these other wrecks. I figured it out from something I read." He stood proudly, almost foolishly, talking. "When you blasted off, the cables held for a second, and that was just long enough to break the momentum of the blast-off, so you flopped back. This is good cable —it cost me forty-nine dollars. See the rest of it here?"

"Yeah," said Small-Eyes. "What are you doin' with it?"

"That's the reason I had to hold you back," said Junior. "I hadn't finished attaching our jalopy to your ship, so I needed more time. I figured when you dropped back, I'd have time enough to tie up our old jalopy, and that's what I did. The jalopy's tied to the other end of this cable."

Small-Eyes was very attentive.

"How come you're spilling all this stuff?" he asked quietly. "You think you're kiddin' somebody?"

"I'll tell you anything you want to know," said Junior. "I don't want you to hurt my friends 'cause of me, and I can catch you anyway."

"Yeah . . ." said Small-Eyes, thoughtfully, looking at Junior in wonder. "I bet you really think so. Look, kiddo," he said, "you got to find out that real life isn't one of them stories they write for kids. It don't work out that way. And maybe you're gonna find that out

now." He paused. "You got that jalopy tied to us so's it would cut our speed down, huh?"

"No. I was going to be in it, and you'd be towing me along. Then I'd signal with my sonic pistol against your hull all the way."

The forthright answers were stopping Small-Eyes each time.

"You think the kid's stalling for time?" he asked one of the other men. "Maybe he got hold of the I.P. somehow . . ."

The man had been examining the long-barreled sonic pistol that had been in Junior's kit. He shook his head.

"Not with this," he said. "This thing's a toy. It might carry, but it's too weak to locate. They couldn't find it within 30,000 miles, maybe more."

Small-Eyes sighed inaudibly in relief. His voice had grown colder all during the talking. Now he said, without looking at Junior,

"Okay, kid. We ain't goin' to spoil your plans. We'll hitch the jalopy on and tow you out a couple of thousand miles, then we'll cut you loose. If the I.P. heard you, they'll come down here and your friends can tell them where you are."

"You can't do that," Red cried, running up to Small-Eyes. "He's liable to die out there!"

Savagely, Small-Eyes kicked out and caught Red in the stomach and Red fell to the ground, writhing in pain.

"I'm through playing games with you kids," Small-Eyes said quietly. He turned to the other men. "Make that kid tie the cable onto us," he said tersely. "Then put him in the jalopy and seal him inside."

He tossed the toy sonic gun in his hand, then put it into a pocket, looking at Junior being torn away from his older brother who was lying still on the ground.

"Maybe the I.P. can find him . . . sometime," he said.

HALF an hour later, five boys were standing in the dark valley, watching the jets of the black grow stronger. Two of them were bent over a thin cable, trying to wrench its strands with pocket knives, or foul its tight expanse by running it into one of the wrecks. Every attempt in the five minutes had failed. Above the valley was the jalopy, and in it was Junior. In a moment it would be swinging off behind the larger black ship, its negligible bulk too little to upset the initial velocity of the first ship.

The flames spat out gold and red in greater volume as the jets warmed again, and their thunder was echoed by the hammering of five hearts. For the first time, the latent tragedy of the valley became a stark, maddening, brutal reality, and its force blinded and horrified them, and terror at last had sprung full-grown.

"No," Red sobbed, struggling with the cable. "It won't part." His hands were raw and bleeding. The others choked back their hopelessness and tried vainly to cut the strands.

Suddenly the jets exploded in full volume and the cable ripped out of their hands like a living thing, burning the skin and flesh from them. It tightened and sang in a high note as the little slack caught up the jalopy. The next instant, two ships had sprung into the sky and were gone from sight.

After that, time ceased to exist. There was only darkness and cold and despair. Once Wes said to Red,

"You shouldn't have done it. I didn't care what they did." His voice was numb, and after that there was silence . . .

"Listen!" said Joe.

It was the song of a ship, burning the

atmosphere, tearing through the layers of atmosphere. A thin flash of light cut across the heavens, was gone and returned. Incredulously they cheered and shouted, and the lighted ship came down farther, until suddenly it switched on its landing lights and they could see its brilliant golden hull—the gold of the Interplanetary Patrol! Breathlessly they ran to where the ship was easing down to a landing, its under jets kicking up clouds of burnt earth. And then it settled and several officers and men came out, astonished to find five boys standing there.

"What . . . what is this?" cried one of the officers. "Have you boys been sending out distress signals?"

They fought with each other to speak, until Red silenced them all and told the story, and at the end of it, the officers looked at each other.

"You were right, Lieutenant," said the first officer, the Captain, gravely. "I'd never have believed it." He turned to the boys and said, "Get into the ship, lads. We're going to make a search, though there's little chance by now."

Soon afterward, the I.P. ship blasted off again and was gone from Yeameth's. The Captain kept questioning the boys again and again, trying to piece together an added bit of information from what they knew.

"You say it was a toy sonic gun?" he asked, and when he was answered affirmatively, he shook his head. "Of course, Lieutenant, that accounts for the old code, but it does nothing more."

"Captain," said Red, "maybe if we knew how you ever got here, we might be able to help more. You see, Junior knew all about these things, and he must have known that his toy gun wouldn't be able to be located—"

"Yes," the Captain nodded, "I've just said that. You see, first we received distress signals which we couldn't trace beyond a wide area. But then, thanks to Lieutenant Roberts here, we deciphered the other signals which were in the old Morse code, and in which the word "Yeameth' was *spelled out* for us. It was a dangerous but very clever device."

"That's what I mean," said Red, earnestly. "Junior must have figured you might not come in time." He clinched his fists. "Whatever it is, I know that somehow he'll find a way. He's got to . . ."

TIME passed. In the blackness of the void there was no feeling of time or of motion. Once the boys overheard the Captain mutter, "If we only knew the general direction. We may be going away from them as fast as we can. It looks hopeless. Send out the general alarm again."

It was towards the changing of the watch that a bright star flashed in the inky sky. It flashed with an intensity that no star had ever had before, with a cold, white brilliance that mounted higher and higher until the sky blazed —and as suddenly as it had been born, it died, and was gone again.

But on the bridge there was life and sudden action. Bells clanged and crew members came running to their posts. In the navigation room the star had been charted, the distance measured. Captain Lane said to the boys, "We're changing course. That was something rather unusual."

"What was it?" said Freddie. "You seem to know."

"We can't be sure," said the Captain, evasively. He looked away as he spoke. "You've been very brave, lads. Remember to remain brave." He walked away, unable to say more.

The powerful ship sped on. On the worlds that lay near and far there was daylight and night-time, but here there

was only the eternal night of the void, the cold, crystal blackness. For almost two hours the ship sped in its new direction, and once Lieutenant Roberts was heard to remark thankfully that they had not been too far off in their own direction. Even then, there was little hope in his voice.

Then, suddenly there was action again, and battle orders piped through the ship. The black ship had been sighted! It raced off the starboard bow, a sleek, solitary marauder—but it was alone! There was no sign of the little jalopy that had been tied to its stern.

Captain Lane spoke into the communicator, his face grim.

"Ease speed and stand by for boarding party," he called to the black ship.

So fast had been the approach of the I.P. craft that it had come upon its quarry before any escape maneuvers had been possible. No detectors could be of avail against such superior speed and equipment. The black ship slackened speed and let the I.P. vessel draw closer to it.

Captain Lane spoke through the pipes.

"Guns ready for firing." He said to Roberts. "They're giving up very easily, aren't they?"

"Yes, sir. Too easily, though they'll find us ready for them. If that's Ed Murdock's gang in there—"

ALL at once, the black ship had opened its port hatches and four small-bore electric guns poked through. Flame burst from them the instant the I.P. craft fell heavily over to port. So sudden had been the maneuver that it seemed as if the ship had been hit, and the motion had thrown the boys off their feet. A second later, the military vessel righted itself and came up underneath and slightly to starboard of the black ship.

Captain Lane flashed his hand across a row of white buttons, and the guns of the military ship spoke. There was a single, blinding flash and when eyes had begun to see again, the black ship was lying motionless where it had been hurled, miles away, its whole starboard side torn open, like a huge dead fish with its innards exposed.

"Boarding party will take over," Captain Lane spoke quietly into the pipes. The short-lived battle was over.

Red, dashed against a bulkhead, cried out,

"But my brother might have been on that ship!"

"No, lad," said the grim-faced Captain. "You must be brave now. Believe me, if there had been one chance in a thousand, I would have taken that ship whole. As it was," he clenched his fists, "I didn't care if we killed them all. But one thing you can always remember—the means of your brother's death . . . was the means whereby we captured one of the most desperate criminals that ever lived."

"But he's not dead!" Red cried. "He can't be!"

The Captain spoke presently.

"Do you remember that bright flare in the sky a few hours ago—the thing that caused us to change our course? That could only have been one thing, and that alone explains why the little ship is no longer here. That flash was your little jalopy burning. It was an old ship, made of imperfect magnesium alloys, and those cut-throats must have fired it. It went up like a torch . . ."

Red was silent, stunned. He looked out through the porthole and his unseeing eyes gazed at a dory that was returning from the black ship. The I.P. vessel had placed men aboard the black ship, men who would repair her and bring her back to port . . . Slowly, the thought occurred to Red.

"Captain," he said, quietly, "Junior knew about the magnesium. He told us about it. He knew everything. And you know, the way he walked into the trap last night—that wasn't like him, or the way he kept telling them things. He used to tell me all kinds of things that were sort of half true when he was up to something." He paused, not knowing how to voice his thoughts. "Captain," he said, "would you go back over the course that they must have taken? I don't know why, but I have a feeling, a funny feeling . . ."

Captain Lane nodded once and spoke into the pipes. His brows were knit reflectively as he watched Red, and he tried to stifle a sigh. In a few moments the military ship was headed back over the course.

GREAT arc lights swept the void, cutting wide swathes out of the darkness as the ship plowed ahead. To either side, the vessel had its tiny scouting dories darting about, making the search more effective. At every post there was a lookout. Even a jalopy had to leave some trace of itself when it burned. Time passed with incredible slowness. Meanwhile the baggage taken from the black ship had revealed the loot of a daring robbery, a robbery that Junior had correctly called. Captain Lane stood at one of the portholes with Red, and there they were when the huge molten cinder was found.

One of the arc lights had found it, lying still in space, streaked with white and still warm. The great ship paused while the dories began to circle it. Suddenly one of the dories began to blink out a series of signals, and the next instant there was pandemonium. There was no sense in what it said. It couldn't be!

But it was true! They could see the dories open their hatches and sending men out in space-suits, taking in a small figure that had been hidden by the bulk of the cinder. Frantically, the dory sped back to its lock in the ship. Eager hands took the burden, carried Junior up the stairs to the ship's hospital. For it was Junior, and he was alive! He was breathing faintly and he was half numb with cold, but he was conscious. It was the dory bos'n who told them, huskily.

". . . and when we looked to the other side of the cinder, sir, we saw him waving at us. I don't know how, sir, but you see this little toy space helmet and this little oxygen flask? Well, sir, he was wearing them both, and somehow, though I'll never understand it for the rest of my days, they kept him alive . . . toys like that. And he stayed near the cinder, and the heat kept him from freezing . . ." He looked at Junior and added, "And all the time he kept saying something about signals."

From under the oxygen tent, Junior nodded his head emphatically. Suddenly Red stuck a hand in under the tent and pulled out a small kit that was still fastened to Junior. He opened a little box in it, labeled "Messages—Secret and Otherwise" and pulled out a folded note. His hands trembled as he read it and showed it to the Captain. It read:

Dear Frends and Bro. Red; I am riting this in cayse my plan does not work. I don't want you to think that I walked into a trap becawse of you, as I had three other sound detectors attacht to their ship and new what they were doing. I wanted them to tow me with them in th jalopy, so I could signal the I.P. even after they were gone. That is why I came out, and also why I told them so much truth, as it was not all true, but just eou enuff to make them think I was too much of a trouble maker to leave behind, and also make them mad. So

my plan has worked up to now, and I am going to start a fire in the ship before they cut me loose, and the fire will make this bad alloy burn like a giant's alarm. Meanwile I will jump out when it burns open and use my helmet and oxygen until the I.P. picks me up, as I know they will. Your loving friend and bro. Junior Hendricks.

P.S. Please escuse spelling, as that is one of my weak points.

When they had finished reading the note, they left Junior, who by then was asleep. It was some time before anyone said anything, and then Captain Lane said,

"I don't believe those toys of his would have done the same things for anyone who didn't believe in them as much as he did. You boys are older than he is, and you understand better what he's done. There is such a thing as faith, the faith Junior had in his toys, the faith Red had, ultimately, in his brother . . ."

But the Captain might have been distressed to hear the boys some time later, as the ship swung homeward. Joe said, dubiously,

"You know, I been thinking about what the Captain says, especially about the toys." He looked around confidentially, "I think he's nuts," he said.

"Mmmmm," Freddie nodded sagely. "So do I."

Red grinned at Wes.

"I see what you're getting at," he said. "Me and Wes have already decided to save a few box-tops ourselves."

"Gee," said Pete, "I'm thinking of the exact same thing!" He smiled. "That Captain must be nuts. Toys, huh? Some toys!"

(Continued from page 5)

WE also met several artists. Hannes Bok, for one, and we are planning to get some of his work for you. The work of Virgil Finlay is hereby welcomed to our pages also—if that gentleman will kindly come out of his hiding and let the world know his address! Drop us a line, Virgil. We've got a few nice assignments drifting around, waiting for you.

A READER asks: "What will Paul do when he runs out of cities?" Well, that's easy. We've got a new series waiting for him when this one's finished, in about six months. We didn't see Paul while we were in the big city, but we did manage to get lost trying to find him All of which led us to Wall street, which we left hastily. Figuring out words per page is as far as we ever get into higher mathematics! They talk in pretty big numbers in Paul's vicinity.

A HIGH spot of our visit was meeting that popular author of "Jalu, The Golden Girl" in our companion magazine a year ago, Orlin F. Tremaine. We tried to persuade him to write us more of his fascinating and expert fiction, but it seems he's publishing a magazine himself! Well, good luck, Orlin!

WHAT? Oh, certainly. We saw the statue of Liberty, and we saw all the other sights just like any common greenhorn westerner. But we didn't see many copies of AMAZING STORIES left on the stands! When an editor travels around, he finds out who reads his books—and New York reads AMAZING! Which is why we rushed back and got out this extra-good issue. We wanted to show our appreciation for all the nice things people said to us.

MANLY Wade Wellman *belongs* in New York, take it from us. He's big enough to be another *Empire State* himself! However, William P. McGivern, who made the trip with us, is no baby himself, and it was with anxiety that we watched a duel grow imminent between the two during an author's tete-a-tete. However, nothing happened beyond a vigorous handshake, and a vow to outdo each other in future science fiction stories. Go to it, boys!

HERE'S a point that was amazing to us. Not one author tried to high-pressure us into buying a story. Well, there's a reason, we think, and it makes us feel good. These boys know we buy good stories, and they sure can write 'em. So they just showed us a swell time, and didn't talk shop. Thanks, boys!

FERDINAND and Isabella were pikers when it comes to modern science, and scientific exploration. And to Christopher Columbus, it was a headache to raise enough money to finance his little jaunt which was to discover a vast New World. Yet, the cash invested in his trip was utterly trivial as compared to today's exploration pilgrimages. It has been calculated that the expedition of Chris Columbo cost his backers a paltry two thousand dollars.

Contrast this with the cost of Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd's Antarctic Expedition—well over a cool million smackers!

YOU'VE probably heard someone quip, when asked to take a seat, "No thanks, I'm taller standing up."

The remark itself seems humorously logical enough, but, odd though it seems, is not substantiated by scientific fact.

It has been determined that the average person is taller lying down than he is standing up. Although the difference in height is generally a slight one, there have been tests made on persons in whom as much as an inch in difference has been measured!

Gravity, or something, does it, we guess.

NOW and then you hear tales of gigantic waves washing over islands, ships, towns, and what-have-you. Generally the tales of the incredible proportions reached by the wave have been pretty darned terrifying. Some old salts will even describe—and with a frightening ring of authenticity in their voices—waves they've seen which reached proportions of two and three hundred feet in height.

But you've a right to be skeptical about such yarns, for it is scientifically estimated that waves are seldom greater than fifty feet in height. Seen from a ship on the ocean, however, they very often appear to be many times higher.

The highest wave ever recorded by the U. S. Hydrographic Office of the Navy Department was encountered by the British steamship, Majestic, on the North Atlantic Ocean. This wave measured eighty feet high.

MANY of us have gotten used to cursing the weatherman, but few of us have any idea of how and when weather forecasting was first conceived. The idea for charting weather predictions on atmospheric evidences was advanced by the German physicist, Brandes, in 1820. Then Professor Elias Loomis, of Yale, produced the first synchronous weather chart in 1843.

The term, forecast, was first used in connection with weather predictions by Admiral Robert Fitzroy of England, at the time when the Meteorological Department first started issuing general weather predictions in the month of August, 1861.

THE next time you hear someone muttering, through chattering teeth, "This weather is colder than, uh, er—" help him along by ending his simile with the word "Verhoyansk."

If your stammerer is startled and uncomprehending, explain to him quite patiently that Verhoyansk is in the province of Yakutsk, Siberia, and is definitely the coldest spot in the world actually inhabited by humans. It's called "The Pole Of Cold" and with plenty of reason!

ONE of the world's most ancient and fascinating mysteries is the question as to the origin of the Mayan race. Among its many astonishing features, Mayan civilization evolved a complex manner of living and is credited with having developed higher mathematics and astronomy to a stage unequalled by even the Egyptians.

In spite of this, the source of the civilization still remains a dark secret, while research goes on in the vast libraries of the Vatican, in Rome, concerning traces of the Mayan's own ancient historical documents which were burned by invaders at the time of the Spanish Conquest.

YOU'VE seen bald-headed barbers—at least half of them seem to be minus hirsute adornment—and occulists wearing eyeglasses, not to mention dentists with lots of gold teeth in their smile. And yet, the oddities constantly appearing in these three jobs aren't at all paradoxical when we realize that doctors not only fail to outlive their patients, but die two years sooner than the average citizens do.

This startling oddity was recently brought to light by a check of insurance company longevity ratings!

REMEMBER the April, 1939 cover, illustrating "World Without Women" by Thornton Ayre; and the March, 1940 cover, illustrating an invasion by Martians? Those were what you fans call "gadget" covers. They seem to be your favorite kind of cover, and so, next month, in connection with Stanton A. Coblentz's new novel (another Sunken World story!) we had Robert Fuqua paint another such cover.

It came to us this morning, and as we write this column, we are looking up at it covertly, and smiling to ourselves.

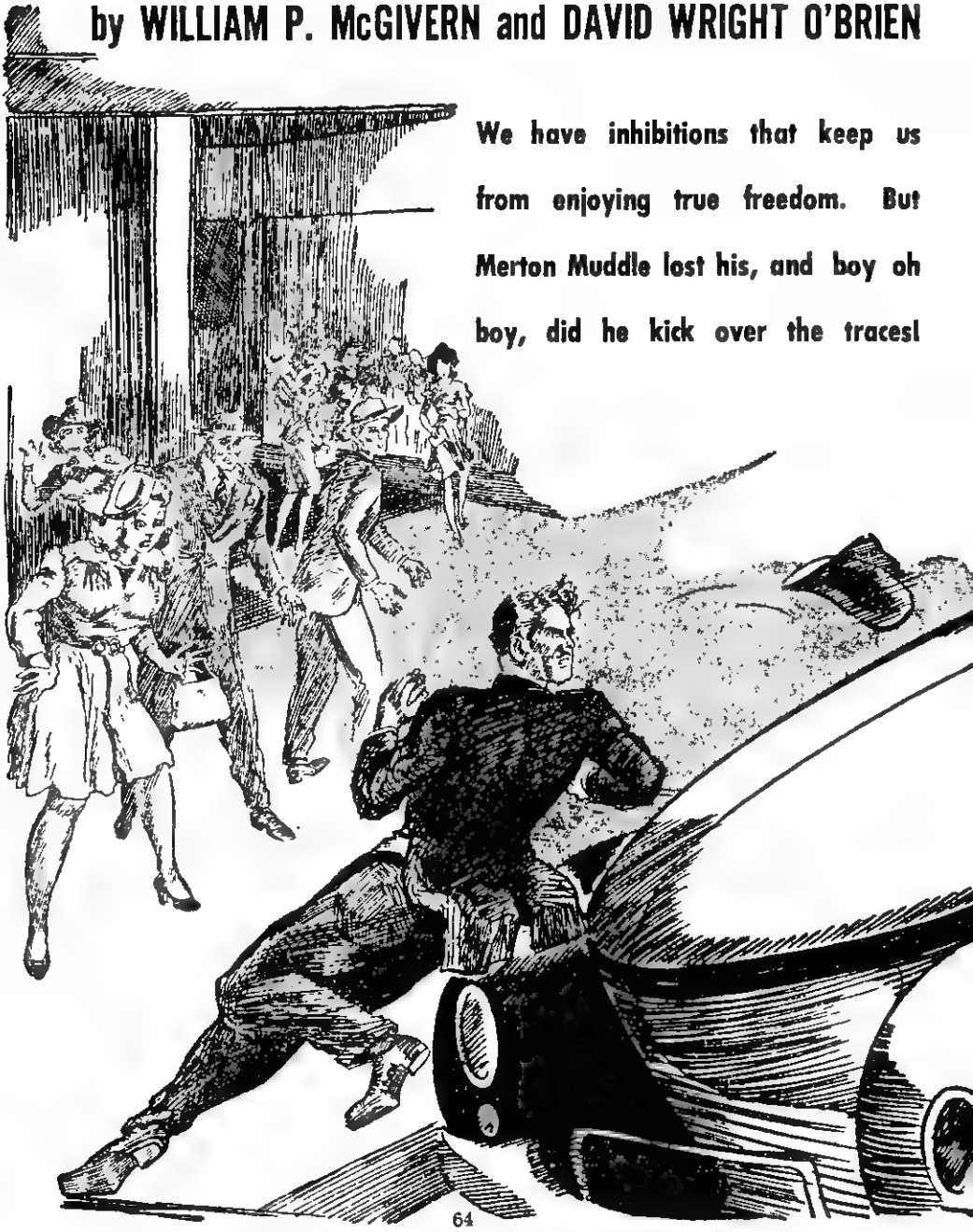
"There's a treat for the readers!" we keep exclaiming to ourselves. And you can take our word for it, it will be a treat!

IT'S about time we began to forecast the appearance of Don Wilcox's new novel, to appear in two parts, as our latest "big-time" serial. It's all we had hoped it would be, and more. It's certainly the best work of this writer who began from scratch with science fiction, and has risen to a pinnacle that tops even that of the now legendary Stanley G. Weinbaum. In fact, your editor, who knew Weinbaum personally, can state at this time, without exaggeration, that Wilcox has already usurped his niche in fame. *Rap.*

Mr. Muddle does as he Pleases

by WILLIAM P. McGIVERN and DAVID WRIGHT O'BRIEN

We have inhibitions that keep us from enjoying true freedom. But Merton Muddle lost his, and boy oh boy, did he kick over the traces!



MERTON MUDDLE clutched his slightly moth-eaten dressing robe close about his scrawny frame and listened apprehensively. Encouraged by the deep silence, he crept cautiously past his wife's bedroom and began a furtive descent of the winding stairs that led to the first floor of his modest home.

Halfway down, a step creaked under his foot. Instantly he froze into immobility—all except his knees which continued to quaver. If his wife discovered him now— Mr. Muddle closed his eyes and swallowed nervously. The mere thought of this was enough to start icy fingers tickling his spine.

But there was no sound from his wife's room, and Muddle gave a shuddery sigh of relief as he realized she hadn't heard the betraying board. He continued down the steps.

In the hallway at the foot of the stairs, he paused, debating whether to get the key to the mailbox first, or to

The car bore down on Merton Muddle and he leaped for his life. "Hy'a Muddle, old boy," he heard. "Hop in!"

see if the package had arrived. He opened the door, peering out onto the porch.

There it was.

A small, plain brown package about four inches square. Just as the advertisement had described it. It was too bulky to fit in the mail box so the postman had deposited it on top of the mail box. There was a letter sticking in the slot of the mail box.

But Merton Z. Muddle was paying no attention to anything except the precious brown box. It contained pills. Not just ordinary pills but very special pills. Mr. Muddle trembled with anticipation as he recalled the text of the intriguing advertisement.

PEPPER'S PITUITARY PILLS PROMOTE PERSONALITY!!

There was more of it. The pills, Mr. Pepper promised solemnly, would rejuvenate tired tissues, reanimate flagging personalities, release their users from inhibitions and restrictions—in short make a new man out of any and all who had recourse to their efficacious and miraculous properties. This was followed by a string of endorsements from a collection of alert, energetic gentlemen who all swore by Pepper's Pills.

Mr. Muddle on reading this ad had eagerly clipped the coupon, enclosed a dollar in an envelope and mailed it soon as possible.

Which was not exactly an unusual procedure for Mr. Muddle. He always answered advertisements. He could no more resist clipping coupons and sending for merchandise than an opium fiend could resist a drag at his pipe. It was an affliction, a mania that amounted to an obsession.

His basement was crammed to the walls with exercise sets, patented carburetors, rowing machines, sets of books, hair removers, and his latest acquisition, three hundred feet of barbed wire fencing.

It was the barbed wire fencing that had topped the climax. His wife, Nellie, had almost left him when she discovered the wire in the basement. Mr. Muddle shivered remembering that day. She had solemnly sworn that the next time he answered an advertisement she would leave him forever.

MR. MUDDLE peeked cautiously up the stairs. He had been on the wagon for weeks, had not answered a single advertisement, but Pepper's Pituitary Pills had affected him like a bar rag waved under the nose of an incorrigible drunkard. He had broken his promise to his wife, but she would never know it. That was why he had gotten up early enough to meet the mailman, hide his package and still have plenty of time left to climb back in bed for another nap before leaving for work.

And now Mr. Muddle tip-toed onto the porch, closing the screen door carefully behind him. In two steps he reached the mail box and then his hands were holding the eagerly awaited package. He was aware of his breath coming faster as he ripped off the first layer of brown paper and by the time the cardboard box was visible his heart was pounding against his ribs like a pile driver.

Inside the box nestled a small bottle filled with twelve pills. A year's supply. One pill a month and in a year he would be a new man. It was exhilarating. He removed the bottle and then his curiosity got the better of him. He unscrewed the cap and poured the pills into the palm of his hand. He shook his head admiringly. It was amazing how they could pack all that

power into these little pills.

He stood there, dreaming of the New Merton Muddle, when his ears caught a tiny noise in the house.

His wife! A clammy sweat broke out on him, poured down his trembling legs. A wild hysteria gripped him, holding him motionless.

For a terrible, sickening instant he remained frozen rigidly and then recovering his senses, he peered guiltily about. He must get rid of the evidence. He hurled the box over the porch rail, kicked the brown paper down the steps with a speed and craftiness born of desperation. But the pills—they were still in his moist hand, damning and condemning him with their presence.

He glared desperately about the porch. There was nothing to conceal them in. In another second it would be too late. Without thinking, Mr. Muddle, opened his mouth, tilted his head and swallowed the twelve incriminating pills.

Then he grabbed the letter from the mail box and hurried back inside the house trying his best to act like a man who had just stepped out for the mail.

He even hummed a bit to strike the correct note of nonchalant indifference. To his surprise and relief the hallway was empty and so, he discovered after a quick peak, were the downstairs rooms.

He noticed then that the letter in his hand was in his wife's handwriting and addressed to himself. It had been mailed the previous night. Not being the type who puts two and two together, Mr. Muddle opened the letter without misgivings. His eyes widened incredulously as he read:

"Merton:

I am leaving you. When you receive this note I will be gone. I will be at Mother's for a time, but please do not attempt to communicate with me. I have endured your drab, uninteresting presence as long as I can. This is good-bye.

Nell."

The paper slipped from his nerveless fingers and he stared uncomprehendingly about at the familiar surroundings.

Nellie gone! It wasn't possible. She couldn't—a sudden thought struck him. Maybe it was just a joke. This cheering thought accompanied him as he trotted up the stairs to her bedroom. That must be it. She was just trying to make him nervous.

But her bed had not been slept in. Merton looked sorrowfully at the neatly made bed and a large tear trickled down his nose.

His gloom lasted for several seconds and then he felt the unfamiliar stirrings of anger. What was it she had said in her note? She had endured his drab and uninteresting personality as long as she could, that was it.

Drab and uninteresting was he? He'd show her.

"Drab, am I?" He scowled at the drab image that faced him in his wife's mirror. "Uninteresting, am I?" His chest swelled with a mighty determination. A precedent shattering determination.

"I'll show her," he cried loudly. "Just for that I'll miss the eight-sixteen this morning!"

BUT he didn't. The habit of fourteen years was not to be so lightly disregarded. And when the eight-sixteen pulled out at eight-twenty, Mr. Muddle was occupying his usual seat and his eyes were boring into his paper. Also as usual.

The next thing that happened was

not according to schedule. Mr. Muddle raised his eyes and met those of the man occupying the opposite seat.

The man winked at Mr. Muddle.

For a breathless second Mr. Muddle was too flabbergasted to even close his mouth and then he ducked his head back into the sheltering confines of his newspaper.

Mr. Muddle knew better than to talk to strangers. The time he had bought the Michigan Avenue bridge had taught him that much at least. But the man looked so familiar that Mr. Muddle wasn't sure but that he might be some chance acquaintance of his.

He kept his nose in his paper, however, until his station was called and then he stood up. He noticed out of the corner of his eye that his winking friend was also standing up.

And then Mr. Muddle realized why the man had seemed so familiar. The fellow was the exact counterpart of Merton Muddle.

"Goodness," Mr. Muddle thought nervously, "It's like looking in a mirror."

Except that this other gentleman wore his hat at a rakish angle and had a merry, devilish glint in his eye, he might have been Mr. Muddle's twin.

Mr. Muddle continued to stare until the outgoing passengers swept him down the aisle, but as he was leaving the car he bumped into the fellow again.

The man winked at him, leaned closer.

"Great day, isn't it?" he said conversationally. "That sun, that air." He sniffed appreciatively. "Glorious, isn't it?"

Mr. Muddle didn't answer right away. He was still speechless from surprise at the man's resemblance to himself.

"You'll pardon me," he said finally, "but I seem to have forgotten your name. Your face is familiar but—" his voice trailed off lamely.

"Don't give it a thought," his companion said carelessly, "It's a silly name anyway. Muddle. Merton Z. Muddle. Did you ever hear of a sillier name than that?"

"It can't be," cried Mr. Muddle distractedly, "That's my name. *I'm* Merton Z. Muddle."

His companion shook his head sadly.

"That's too bad, isn't it? But just don't talk about it and people won't notice."

Mr. Muddle had the distinct feeling that he was going crazy.

"Wait a minute," he bleated, "If you're Merton Muddle, where do you live?"

"Sixty-twenty Greenwood," his companion answered pleasantly, "Frightful little hole, but I'm thinking of moving soon."

Mr. Muddle got a tight grip on himself before answering.

"Sixty-twenty Greenwood," he said in an oddly strained voice, "is where I live."

"That so?" his companion was peering ahead into the crowd. "Then you know what a miserable little hole it is."

BEFORE Mr. Muddle could reply, his companion gripped him by the arm.

"Look," he chortled, "see that woman, the great big fat one? All dignity and presence." He pulled the tie pin from his tie and nudged Mr. Muddle. "Watch and see what happens to her dignity."

Before Mr. Muddle could speak, his irrepressible companion had ducked into the crowd that was streaming through the depot to the street. Mr. Muddle peered ahead and saw the large, dignified woman walking a few

dozen feet ahead of his counterpart.

He had a vague, unpleasant premonition of impending doom but he shook his head determinedly. Nothing else could happen this morning that would shock him. He had been through everything that—

Muddle stepped into the depot drugstore and purchased a new package of Pepper's Pituitary Pills. He'd wasted the sample pills, and he really wanted to give them a year's trial—

Suddenly the clamor of the depot was shattered by a frantic, shocked scream that blasted through the air like an outraged train whistle.

"Yeeeeeeeow," a woman's voice howled hysterically. "He stuck me, he stuck me." Here the indignant voice soared off again to unintelligible shrieks.

Mr. Muddle hurried forward again with the crowd, craning his neck eagerly for a better look. In the middle of a sympathetic crowd stood the large. horsey looking woman his peculiar companion had pointed out. Now, she was wringing her hands and shrieking at the top of her voice, which apparently had no ceiling.

Mr. Muddle nudged and edged his way up closer until he stood on the inside of the circle that surrounded the wailing woman. Her sobs subsided at last to gusty, angry snorts, and she stared balefully about her.

"I saw him," she cried loudly, "and if I ever see—" her voice broke off as her eyes riveted themselves on a small, motheaten man in the crowd.

"Goodness," thought Mr. Muddle, "she looks just as if she's looking at me." His eyes popped wide open then as he realized that she *was* looking at him, that she was advancing toward him.

"You worm," she hissed, "you despicable, cowardly little worm. Don't try and get away from me."

Mr. Muddle backed away before her ominous advance while whimpering noises sounded in his throat.

"You—you—you're making a mistake," he stuttered in terror. "I don't know what you're talking about."

The crowd was pressing in on Mr. Muddle and then to his mingled relief and consternation a large, uniformed policeman broke through the crowd and stepped between him and the feminine juggernaut.

"Now hold yer horses," the policeman barked. "What do you think's going on here?"

"That man," the woman screamed. "He—he assaulted me."

The policeman followed the direction of her accusing finger until his eyes rested on Mr. Muddle's trembling figure. Then he looked back at the woman.

"With what," he asked.

"A—a—pin," the woman answered. "He stuck me with it."

"But officer," Mr. Muddle entreated, "I didn't. She's mistaken. I—I—I'm innocent."

"Now let's get this straight," the policeman said grimly. "Where did he stick you, mam?"

The woman opened her mouth and then crimsoned.

"None of your business," she snapped. "He stuck me that's all."

"Are you sure it was him?"

THE woman moved closer and peered closely at Mr. Muddle. For the first time she appeared uncertain.

"Well," she said slowly, "It looks like him—and then again it doesn't. What I mean is the man that stuck me had a devilish, impudent grin on his face. This man—he's different."

The policeman scowled, pulled out his handkerchief and mopped his brow.

"Lady," he said in almost a whisper,

"I can't go arresting people on a description like that. If I was to pick up everybody that looked devilish we'd have to build a new cell block."

"Well," the woman looked disdainfully at Mr. Muddle, "maybe I was wrong. This little pipsqueak wouldn't have the nerve to do a thing like that."

After more humiliating grilling, Muddle was able to escape the snickering crowd and hurry out of the depot. Never had he been so completely mortified, humiliated and degraded.

Hurrying along, head down, he almost bumped into a figure that stepped out in front of him from a doorway.

"Whatayasay, Muddle, old chum," the figure addressed him. "They kind of gave you a bad moment, didn't they?"

Mr. Muddle jerked his eyes from the pavement and focused them on the dapper, smiling figure standing in front of him. It was the amazing chap he'd met on the train, the exact counterpart of himself. And with this recognition came a sudden flash of understanding.

"You," he gurgled. "You stuck that woman, didn't you? You're the one that got me into all that trouble."

"Well," Mr. Muddle's counterpart wagged his finger playfully, "you would have liked to, wouldn't you?"

Mr. Muddle started to deny this vigorously but then he scratched his head. He had never even thought of such an outrageous thing, but it would have been kind of fun to see her— He jerked himself up with a jolt.

"I wouldn't," he said coldly, "have done anything of the kind."

"Oh rot," his counterpart snorted. "That's the trouble with you. You've got too many inhibitions. You're never natural, unaffected, carefree. Never do the things you want to, because you don't even know you want to do them. Always worrying about what people will think of your actions. Me, I don't give a damn."

"Well," Mr. Muddle said heatedly, "if I'm going to be blamed for what you do, naturally you needn't worry." He thought that he had expressed the matter very neatly and was just turning away when he realized what he had said. It was true. He, Merton Muddle, would be blamed for anything this fellow did.

"Now wait a minute," he cried, "this joke has gone far enough. I won't be responsible for the things you do. I'm Merton Muddle—"

"So am I," his counterpart said pleasantly.

"I've got a home—" Merton cried.

"Me too."

"But I pay the taxes," Muddle insisted. "I'm warning you—you go around telling people you're Merton Muddle and you're going to get in trouble."

"Why?"

"Because," Mr. Muddle shrieked, "I'm Merton Muddle. I have a home, a wife—"

"Aaaaaah,"

"What did you say?" Mr. Muddle cried.

"I said Aaaaaah." Mr. Muddle's counterpart winked knowingly and rolled his eyes heavenward. "Delightful woman and all that."

"Just what do you mean," Mr. Muddle's voice was ominous, "by 'and all that'?"

"Just 'and all that'."

"We're getting nowhere," Mr. Muddle cried, "and I've got to get to work. I'm almost late now. But we can't both be me. That's one thing I'm sure of."

"There you go again," Mr. Muddle's counterpart warned. "Thinking in a groove. The only explanation for this mix-up is the one that you refuse to

admit. Why? I'll tell you. Because it takes a little imagination, a little original thinking and you're not capable of that."

"I am not," Mr. Muddle retorted, "but it's just crazy to think of it. We both can't be me, because, well just because, that's why."

HIS counterpart shook his head despairingly and then the old merry gleam returned to his eye.

"Okay, we won't argue about it. Let's go to work."

"But," Mr. Muddle protested, "I can't take you to work with me."

"You aren't going to," his counterpart said feelingly. "Working in these caverns of cement is all right for human moles, but me—" he breathed deeply, "I like to flit about, following my fancies and my foibles."

"You," said Mr. Muddle, "are heading for no good end."

"At least I'm heading somewhere," he answered goodnaturedly, "which is more than I can say for you."

Mr. Muddle knew there was something wrong with this reasoning, but he couldn't put his finger on it so he turned and marched stiffly away. He was aware in a few feet that his counterpart was following him. Mr. Muddle's shoulders sagged wearily. Nothing in his previous existence had equipped him to deal with a situation like this so he plodded on, unhappily silent.

At the entrance to the building that housed Lock, Stock & Barrel, Investment Brokers, the firm that employed him, he paused and faced his counterpart resolutely.

"Go away," he said worriedly, "you can't follow me in here."

His counterpart sighed.

"Thank heaven for that." He peered over Mr. Muddle's shoulder into the dim, cavernous hallway that led to the elevator and shuddered. "Mouldy place."

Mr. Muddle should have resented these aspersions but strangely he said nothing. He looked at his counterpart's free, unfettered figure and he sighed wistfully. To go and come as one pleased would be—he gave himself a mental slap on the wrist and coughed disapprovingly.

"Keep out of trouble," he said warningly, "and keep away from me, understand?"

"You know me," his counterpart answered with a wicked grin, "You know me, Muddle old kid."

"That," Mr Muddle said dubiously, "is just why I'm worried."

"Forget it," his counterpart waved a hand generously, "if I get into trouble I won't give my right name."

Mr. Muddle felt a little better. "Whose will you give?"

"Merton Z. Muddle."

"But that's my name."

"Dear me," his counterpart shook his head in amazement, "What an odd coincidence. How very, very, odd. He was still shaking his head and smiling to himself as he walked away from Mr. Muddle and disappeared into the crowd.

Mr. Muddle stood under the archway of the building and bit his lip anxiously. He knew he should be at work but some sixth sense warned him his place was at the side of his devil-may-care, mischievous counterpart. But Mr. Muddle was not in the habit of obeying subtle promptings of his sixth sense so he turned at last and plodded into the building.

AT his desk, where he stamped circulars and did other mechanical clerical work, Mr. Muddle continued to stew. His counterpart, he was

forced to admit, had qualities which he, Muddle, admired in a furtive sort of way. Maybe there was something to his free and easy philosophy, maybe he was right about slaving away in gruelling work—

"Muddle," the voice, cold and angry, sounded at the side of his desk.

Mr. Muddle did not need to glance up to know that speaker was Bludgeon Barrel, lord and master of Lock, Stock & Barrel and keeper of the keys that locked Mr. Muddle's particular fetters.

"Muddle," Bludgeon Barrel repeated, "I have just examined the time cards and I was very disappointed to notice that you punched in thirty-six minutes late today. If you have a reasonable excuse I might be induced to overlook this lapse, inasmuch as it is your first."

Mr. Muddle opened and closed his mouth. He couldn't tell Mr. Barrel that he had been delayed by a mob who thought he had stuck a pin into a woman. Neither could he tell him that he had wasted precious seconds arguing with a man who claimed to be himself.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Barrel," he said miserably. "It was just carelessness on my part. I shall see that it doesn't happen again."

Mr. Barrel was not pleased. He wanted to listen to an excuse that was particular, weigh it carefully and then reject it as being unsatisfactory. This always made him feel better. Gave him a feeling of Judge, Jury and Executioner that he dearly loved. He didn't relish being cheated of his most pleasant pastime. Namely, fattening his ego.

"Hmmmmmm," he hmmmed, "Carelessness. Hmmmmmm. The next time, Mr. Muddle," he spaced each word carefully, "that you are tardy I shall be forced to ask for your resignation."

With this he strode away, feeling happy and important.

Mr. Muddle sat shuddering in the breeze of his wake, so to speak, and then went back to work.

But he could not keep his thoughts on his work. They kept straying to the baffling problem of his counterpart. He thought the whole thing over again and suddenly a phrase his counterpart had used pounded into his consciousness.

"You've got too many inhibitions," that's what he'd said.

He sat for a moment dazed and shaken as he remembered the exact words and then he dug excitedly into his coat pocket and pulled a small booklet entitled, "Directions and Explanation of Pepper's Pituitary Pills."

He jerked the book open, found a certain page, ran his finger down till he found a certain sentence and then he read it with bulging incredulous eyes.

"You have too many inhibitions. You are spineless, afraid of opportunity because your inhibitions, developed since childhood, stand in your way. Pepper's Pituitary Pills stimulate your natural personality by striking inhibitions from the psyche and leaving the natural *you* unfettered and unrestricted. In actuality a *new man is created* over a period of a year. The change is gradual and therefore is not noticed.

The book fell from his hands and he stared glassily in front of him. He understood now. It was monstrous.

He had consumed all the pills—and —just like the book said—a new being had been created—but not in a year; instead, it had happened almost instantly! A new Merton Z. Muddle, free from inhibitions, repressions or—or—anything.

Mr. Muddle suddenly groaned. Where would it all end? What new

trouble was in store for him?

What was the uninhibited Mr. Muddle, his other personality, doing now? Mr. Muddle didn't really want to know. He felt sick enough as it was.

MR. MUDDLE'S moody misgivings were still with him by the time the luncheon chimes had sounded in the offices of Lock, Stock & Barrel. And by the time Muddle had wandered morosely to the elevator and had been carried down to the lobby of the building, these misgivings had congealed, so to speak, into a frozen, stupefied horror.

It was the first time in fourteen years that Muddle had not brought his lunch to work in a paper bag. Nellie had always gotten it ready for him. But this morning, of course, there had been no Nell.

Consequently, feeling the need for food to solace his wounded heart, he was forced to head toward the streets in an effort to locate a suitable restaurant.

He had just stepped out onto the curbstone in front of the building—and was looking aimlessly in either direction—when it happened. A blasting, blatant, thunderous, "BEEEEEE-POOOP!"

Muddle leaped hastily back to the safety of the sidewalk, his heart zooming to his throat. Some fool in an automobile—And even before he had a chance to think further, Muddle saw the cause of the tooting horn. His other self—the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle—had just rolled up in front of the building in an automobile!

And what an automobile!

Cream colored, sleek, streamlined, with a maze of chromium fixtures and do-dads, and a top that was yellow and could be folded back, and which *was*, as a matter of fact, now folded back. Mr. Muddle had seen these cars advertised, of course, and he gasped at the thought of how much they sold for. The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle was behind the wheel, lounging nonchalantly on plush leather upholstery. A cigarette in an incredibly long holder dangled from the corner of his grinning mouth.

Mr. Muddle saw all this through a haze of confused and bewildering emotions. And then he saw the Uninhibited Muddle's friends.

Lady friends, they were. And such an assortment of classy feminine pulchritude as Mr. Muddle had never seen in all his life—even in advertisements. There must have been at least eight of them. Blondes, brunettes, redheads. The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle apparently like variety. Four of the cuddlesome cuties were nestling in the spacious front seat beside the Uninhibited Muddle, and the other four lounged in the back of the car giggling and crying shrilly to their driver in front!

Mr. Muddle saw all this and desperately fought off the swoon he felt approaching. The Uninhibited Muddle was shouting above the clamor of the girls.

"Hiya, Muddle," he yelled. "Howya like the bus? Whatcha think of the dollies? Climb in, chum. We've come to take you to lunch!"

Mr. Muddle was trying to back away, trying to make his knees move with sufficient strength to get him away from there instanter. But the shock had left him momentarily paralyzed. People were gathering on the sidewalk behind him. Already there were envious ooohs and ahhhs coming from the growing crowd. Through it all, Muddle felt a wave of sickening premonition. Supposing his employer, Mr. Barrel, should see him in such a situation?

But Muddle had no chance for flight. He had just been moved sufficiently to turn, and was trying to figure out a way to push through the crowd, when he heard the giggles grow louder behind him, smelled perfume in the air, and heard the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle shout:

"That's it, girls. Go after him. Don't let him get away. We want to take him to lunch."

A SPLIT second later, Mr. Muddle was seized by soft arms, and almost hurled under the four lovely wenches who'd climbed out from the back seat of the glittering phaeton. He had no chance to struggle, no chance to protest. The crowd on the sidewalk was convulsed in gales of laughter as the four young ladies propelled Muddle into the back seat of the car, squealing and protesting feebly.

Then, with a great gnashing of gears and a thundering reverberation from the motor, the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle swung the sleek automobile out into the middle of traffic, while the damsels in the back continued to detain Mr. Muddle.

It must have been fully five minutes later by the time Muddle was able to emerge from the pile-up of pulchritude. Five minutes in which he felt the machine lurching this way and that while the claxon horn blasted deafeningly at odd intervals and the tires screeched in protest with every forty seconds. Mr. Muddle, beneath his beautiful young abductresses, had had the impression that the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle was wheeling the car along at breakneck speed, and with little or no regard for any laws of caution.

Now, as he sat up and looked wildly about, Mr. Muddle saw that this was indeed a fact. The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle had the machine hitting close to eighty-five. And they were still in the crowded business sector. The very sight of the street ahead, rushing up to them while red lights blinked futilely from corner posts and cops shrilled whistles in purple fury, was enough to turn Muddle's stomach upside down and force him to bury his head in his hands.

But the other passengers, including the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle, were taking it all with bland—though somewhat hilarious unconcern. The four vixens in the back, for example, seemed much more concerned with efforts to embrace the shivering Muddle than they were with his uninhibited counterpart's driving. Squealing delightedly, they took turns trying to see who could smear the most lipstick over the cowering Muddle's face.

But Muddle kept his head in his hands, not through any sense of virtue, but because of the terror he felt. This, his numbed brain reasoned, was no time for romance—however tempting.

Finally, with a wild shriek of brakes enthusiastically applied, the luxurious vehicle lurched to a stop. Muddle counted to ten before he opened his eyes. He counted five more—just for the hell of it—before he took his hands from his head and looked up.

They had halted in a slightly more quiet section of town. Halted before a huge canopy that ran from the curb up to an elaborately facaded building. Muddle had seen this building advertised in the papers. It was –in brief—the swankiest and most expensive night spot in town. It was—to be explicit—the "Chez Cutie."

The girls were squealing again, this time in gleeful delight at the realization of where they were to dine. The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle had piled out of the car and now came around beneath the canopy, while a uniformed

doorman, grinning widely, assisted the girls and the shaking Muddle out of the car.

THE Uninhibited Mr. Muddle had dropped behind the eight girls, who had dashed pell mell up the carpeted steps to the door, and sauntered cheerfully beside Mr. Muddle.

"Well, well. Good place to eat," he remarked gaily. "You'll love it. Howja like the girls? See any number in particular thatja want to pass the time with?" He grinned. "I can get rid of the others, if you have any preference."

Mr. Muddle managed a rasping croak.

"I'd better leave. This place is much too expensive. It's for people with lots and lots of money. I can't afford it. Let me leave, please!" His voice ended on a note of pathetic supplication.

"Skip it, chum." The Uninhibited Muddle's wave was careless. "We've got plenty of cash. Of course the car ran pretty high—but it's on time. Whatsa time payment amount to, anyway. What's money amount to, come to think of it. Just green stuff, chum. Just green stuff." He laughed heartily at this observation and slapped Muddle on the back, almost knocking him on his face.

Muddle and his counterpart entered the Chez Cutie, and found that the girls had already taken seats at the side of the dance floor. Much to Muddle's amazement, the place had an orchestra for noontime. It was incredible. Muddle had always presumed that people always confined their music to evenings.

And then they were at the table, and while Muddle tried—with gradually weakening resistance—to battle the efforts of the girls to kiss him, the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle gave their orders to a grinning waiter. Then the orchestra was playing, drowning out all conversation. But the girls kept shouting and the Uninhibited Muddle kept laughing, and nobody seemed to mind much.

There were drinks then. Strange things in tall, cool glasses. Mr. Muddle had never had much more than an occasional sip of light wine at the dinner table—had never permitted Nellie to serve anything else—but now he found himself joining the others in their efforts to see how rapidly they could consume the delightful liquids.

There was food, too. Such repasts as Muddle had never before imagined. Dainty, weird, elaborate, and expensive. But Mr. Muddle had somehow ceased to care about the expensiveness of his surroundings. His uninhibited counterpart had money. Where he'd gotten it, Muddle was unable to imagine. But he had it. That was sufficient for the moment.

Muddle danced, too. Not that he had wanted to. But it had just sort of happened. The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle was returning from the floor with one of the blondes, and he'd stuffed her in Muddle's arms and pushed them both out onto the narrow surface together. Muddle was enjoying it thoroughly by the time the music ended, and he was exceptionally piqued when it stopped. There was nothing to do, then, but to return to the table and have more of those exceptionally fine drinks his counterpart was buying.

And then they were singing, and everytime the waiters would gather round the table and applaud, the Uninhibited Muddle would laugh gaily and write them out a check for their appreciation. It was all very grand. Very hilarious. Mr. Muddle envied his uninhibited counterpart's ability to write checks, just like that, and hand

them to the gaily applauding waiters. When he said as much, after a while, the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle laughed and spilled a drink and told him:

"Why don't you write some, then? Our signatures are just the same. Go ahead, chum!"

SO Muddle wrote checks along with his counterpart, and drank, and ate, and sang, and enjoyed the enthusiastic kisses of the girls. Until he remembered.

Muddle sprang up, knocking over his chair, sobering enough to feel hideously ill.

"Goodness," he squealed. "What time is it?"

The Uninhibited Muddle looked at his watch. "Three o'clock. Sit down. We're a little early for dinner, but we can wait."

But Muddle didn't hear him. He was weaving sickly back and forth over the table, moaning softly. Three o'clock. He was supposed to be back in the offices of Lock, Stock & Barrel by one! What would they do? What would they think? This was terrible.

"I have to get back to work," Muddle moaned, grabbing his chortling counterpart by the shoulder and shaking him. "Please, take me back. This is terrible! I have to get back. Oooooh, I'll probably be fired!"

The Uninhibited Muddle looked at him like a father to an idiot child. He shrugged.

"Okay, spoilsport, okay!"

With a wave of his hand, the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle summoned a waiter.

"The check!" he demanded. "Wetblanket, here," he jerked a thumb at Muddle, "has to get back to work."

The waiter gave Muddle a withering glance, as though the very suggestion that he wanted to return to a tomb of toil was sickening. In a moment the chap returned. He had a card on a silver plate, and gave it to the uninhibited counterpart of Muddle.

The Uninhibited Muddle drew forth a wallet of such dimensions that it would choke a boa-constrictor. Muddle gaped, then gasped. He wondered, with a sudden burning envy, where his counterpart had ever amassed such a wad.

"Hmmmm," mused the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle, glancing at the check. "Hmmmm." He gave the waiter a searching glance.

"I hope," said the waiter, suddenly going frigid, "that there is nothing wrong, Sir."

"Five hundred dollars," the Uninhibited Muddle said aloud. He glanced at the waiter again. "You tried to gyp us, left out the cost of our champagne. That, alone, should add another seventy-five bucks to our bill. Put it on, and make it snappy!"

The waiter took a grip on himself, and babbling and beaming, dashed to the cashier. Mr. Muddle was astounded. He gulped.

"They try to trick you, sometimes," the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle confided with a wink. "Have to be sharp."

Muddle watched in wordless astonishment as the waiter came back and was paid off by the debonair counterpart Then they were moving out of the club. The girls had gone ahead of them and were waiting in the sleek car as they stepped out under the canopy.

"WE'D better hurry," Muddle said, his old fear suddenly returning. "If I don't get back I'll surely lose my job!"

"Whatsa job!" Muddle's counterpart made an appropriate snap of his fingers. "Such a dull job at that." They were standing in front of the car.

"I," glared Muddle, suddenly resentful of his other half's good fortune, "must work for a living. I can't afford to throw money around in the sinful fashion that you do!"

"Boy—I suppose close to six hundred bananas isn't money. I suppose this crate was put together in some kid's basement." He pointed with pride to the sleek phaeton. "What do you call *that*, if you don't call it spending dough?"

A horrible premonition was creeping over Merton Muddle. A sudden weakness assailed his knees. Cold sweat came out on his forehead. He managed to croak:

"But *I* didn't buy this car. *I* didn't pay that check. *I* didn't hand out money to the waiters!"

The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle laughed.

"Who do you imagine did?" He was chortling again. "Santa Claus. maybe?"

Muddle was screeching.

"You mean that you bought that car in *my* name, with the money *I've* saved in the bank? You mean that you're using all the rest of it to throw around on wine, and women, and—" he struggled for air.

"Song?" the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle finished. "Yeeup, I guess that's right. Of course, you don't have but three grand in the bank. The car cost darned near that. There wasn't much left, so I had to borrow a few grand from a loan outfit. Swell chaps at the loan joint. Talked them out of four more grand—and only at thirty percent interest. Intend to go back, when I've run out."

Mr. Muddle was teetering on the brink of hysteria.

"You mean," he shrieked, "that you signed *my* name to those, those loans?"

"Our name," his counterpart corrected. "However," he gave Muddle an encouraging grin, *"tourjours gai!"*

Mr. Muddle was unable to wait for his counterpart's translation of the last phrase. He fainted dead away . . .

TIME WAS BUT A VAGUE BLOT to Mr. Muddle when he again opened his eyes. He was stretched out in the back seat of the luxurious phaeton, quite alone. Sitting up, he looked wildly around. The car was parked. Where the girls and the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle had gone was a mystery. And then, looking to the right, Muddle saw that the car was parked directly in front of his office building.

His head was splitting, and his tongue felt like a doormat. The liquor had completely worn off—but the hangover lingered on, as though it intended to stick around for quite some time.

A quick glance at the clock on the dashboard told Muddle that it was five o'clock. With sickening swiftness, he remembered that it had been three o'clock when he'd last insisted that his counterpart take him back to the office.

The faint—that was it. The faint and the culmination of those tall, cool drinks. He'd been out cold for two hours. Muddle's stomach quickly turned to ice, as he realized that this luxurious wagon, all the money that the Uninhibited Muddle was tossing about, everything, in fact, was mounting against him. The ice became dry ice with the next realization—he was also out of a job. But definitely.

By now, his employer, Bludgeon Barrel had undoubtedly written his name off the lists of employees!

And just as Muddle was certain that these factors were enough to make the strongest of men seek a noose or a gas-filled room, the tall cool drinks began to demand their fiddler's fee. He was suddenly overcome by a hideous

physical nausea in the pit of his stomach.

It was while Muddle was leaning over the side of the sleek machine, giving vent to the promptings of an angry stomach, that he heard the voice behind him. The voice of the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle, cheerfully triumphant.

"What ho!" cried the Uninhibited Muddle. "Pip pip, and all that!" He climbed into the front of the car, behind the wheel.

Muddle turned a pea-green face to him.

"Glug," he said.

"Sick, eh?" the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle said. "That's the price you dampers have to pay. If you'd been decently accustomed to a few drinks, as any gentleman should, this would never have happened."

Muddle pulled himself back into the car.

"Where have you been?" he managed to ask.

"Upstairs." The uninhibited counterpart pointed to Muddle's office building. "Upstairs, giving the old you-know-what to one Bludgeon Barrel, the slave who employed you."

Muddle clutched at the straw of hope.

"You went up there? You took my place? I'm not fired? You talked him out of it?" He felt a sudden surge of gratitude toward this other half of him.

"Hold on, hold on!" The Uninhibited Muddle held up his hand. "Don't get ahead of me. I merely said I went up there. Thought I might take your place. Got rid of the girls and saw that you were in no condition to do so. Played Boy Scout, that's what I did." He suddenly broke into gales of laughter.

Muddle was puzzled, and anxious.

"What's so funny?" he demanded.

"I was thinking of Bludgeon Barrel," said the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle, "you needn't worry about *him* any more!"

Muddle was almost ecstatic.

"Then you *did* talk him into giving me my job back?"

"Not quite. The silly old goat started to belabor me. Couldn't stand for that sort of thing, y'know. Impossible old fossil."

Muddle's elation was a momentary spark that now faded. Once again he was left with nothing but a vacant, rather terrifying, premonition. But the Uninhibited Muddle was chattering on.

"Stood just about fifty-five seconds of it," the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle continued, "and then I let him have it, both barrels." He paused to chortle. "Pun, huh, let Barrel have it—both barrels."

"And?" Mr. Muddle managed to bleat hopelessly.

"He fired us!" the counterpart chuckled. "So I bopped him one on the button for his impertinence!" He was almost doubled up with laughter, now. "You won't have to worry any more, old man. You're free. I struck off the shackles!"

Mr. Muddle moaned softly . . .

MUDDLE sat morosely on the edge of the bed. It was a big bed in a rather bleak hotel room to which the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle had taken him some three hours previously. After learning that his job, too, was now added to his misery, Muddle had wished to return home. But then he'd remembered that Nellie wouldn't be there. So his counterpart had made a decision for him.

"You'll stay at a hotel tonight, old boy," the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle had declared firmly. "And don't worry about Nellie. If she's at her mother's, I can bring her back in a jiff. By

morning, she'll be all ready to forgive and forget. You'll be back in the fold, then. All square."

"But tonight," Muddle had protested.

"Tonight," his counterpart broke in, "I'll take her out and show her a good time. She'll never know the difference. She's my wife, too, in a way."

The logic of the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle had been hard for the real Mr. Muddle to follow. Hard to follow, and even more difficult to bear. The thought of someone else—even though that someone else were a part of him—taking his wife out, his little Nell, was as needling to Muddle as it was shocking. But what could he do? Like the rest of his troubles, there was nothing *to* do—but grit his teeth, bury his head in his hands, and bear it.

So Muddle sat with his head in his hands, bearing it. The only consolation he was able to feel, lay in the fact that the dapper, rakish, Uninhibited Mr. Muddle would undoubtedly be able to lure Nell back home, be able to convince her that she'd made a mistake.

But even that consolation was a dubious one. For the other Muddle might never let the real Mr. Muddle get back to his wife. Mr. Muddle's head was swimming, it was growing much too confused.

Debts, staggering, monstrous debts —the loss of his job—the possibility that he might be soon arrested for assault on Mr. Barrel, not to mention arrest by the loan sharks for falsifying his ability to pay them—plus the loss of Nell. It was more than Muddle's agonized mind could stand. His eyes grew heavy, his brain reeled. He had to think, had to think, had to think. He stretched out for a moment.

MUDDLE awoke with a start, still dressed as he was when he stretched out. The light in the bleak little hotel room was still burning. But it was morning. The sun streaming in through the window told him as much. Told him, too, that it was not early morning. From the strength of the sun—plus a swift glance at his watch —Muddle made the sharp deducement that it was almost eleven o'clock.

Eleven o'clock in the morning. Good Lord—he'd be late for work! Muddle sprang from the bed in an hysteria of haste—and then stopped. He had suddenly remembered everything, including the fact that he no longer had a job. This was the first time in fourteen years that Mr. Muddle hadn't risen early for work on a week day.

Muddle felt sick again. No job, no work, no money—plus the possibility of arrest at any moment. Muddle had a mind's eye picture of himself being forever pursued by the Arm Of The Law. He saw himself chased, like some hunted thing, to the far ends of the earth. Cornered there—i. e. the far ends of the earth—he would be confronted by Police who would say, "We arrest you in the name of the Law, for punching Mr. Barrel in the nose and gypping the loan sharks!"

In the breast of Merton Muddle there was born a new mood. It was the child of despair, and of recklessness. He couldn't stand this any longer. Something had to be done. He must bite the bullet, stiffen the lip, preferably the upper one, and go forth to square himself. Mr. Muddle knew he could never stand the existence of a hunted thing.

He must go, first of all, to the offices of Lock, Stock & Barrel. Then and there he must beg the pardon of Mr. Barrel—do anything to keep that pontifical gentleman from sending him up the river for such a dastardly assault. It was a hard pill to swallow. But

Muddle was in a corner. And even cornered mice gain stout hearts. Muddle stepped to the door of the hotel room. For a moment he paused.

"Courage, Muddle," he told himself. And with an upper lip that trembled only slightly, he stepped out the door. . . .

AT the door to the offices of Lock, Stock, & Barrel, Mr. Muddle took a grip on himself. His knees were shaking like jelly, and his spine had congealed to ice. For a horrible moment, Muddle thought of flight. Thought of anything to avoid facing Mr. Barrel. But no. What had to be done, had to be done. Somehow, Muddle opened the door and stepped inside the suite.

The girl at the switchboard which served as a barrier between the offices and those who would be admitted into their precincts, let out a startled gasp as Mr. Muddle stepped inside.

"Mr. Muddle," she cried. "Stay right where you are, Mr. Muddle." Her voice was frantic. "Mr. Barrel has been looking for you all morning, telephoning everywhere, has men out looking for you now. Don't move, Mr. Muddle!"

She was plugging wires in and out with hysterical haste. Her voice, coming to Mr. Muddle as if from a distance, was speaking to Mr. Barrel; Muddle was frozen with horror. He wanted to run, but all he could do was stand. Barrel was after him. Barrel sought revenge. Barrel's rage must be hideous!

Then, in what seemed to be less than ten seconds later, Bludgeon Barrel, in person, burst out into the reception room and down on Mr. Muddle.

Barrel's red face was redder than Muddle had ever seen it. Barrel's tie was askew, his hands flailed the air. Muddle trembled uncontrollably.

"Mr. Muddle," Barrel thundered. "Merton old boy! Old man, old buddy. This is great. This is wonderful. You've come back!"

Muddle felt suddenly like a man who has lived and died in the space of three seconds. What was this? What was Barrel saying? This was a wild dream. Yes, that was it. A wild dream—or a trick.

Barrel was pumping his hand.

"I apologize for the way I treated you, chum," Barrel was saying. "I'm terribly sorry. You've no idea of how sorry I really am. Forgive me, Merton. Forgive me!"

And repeating this endlessly, the perspiring Mr. Barrel led Muddle into the inner offices, past the rows of clerks, past Mr. Muddle's old desk, and into his own sanctum. Muddle walked like a man in an opium dream. Everything was hazy, groggily muddled. He was trying desperately to adjust himself to it all.

Then Barrel had closed the door on his own office, and seating Muddle in his own special chair before his ornate desk, he said:

"Make yourself at home, boy. This office is yours from now on. I'll take a little one adjoining it." He mopped his face. "I'm glad to know that you reconsidered. Could have ruined us, boy. Just for a silly bit of argument we had, you could have ruined us."

Mr. Muddle was frowning. Obviously Barrel was mixed up about something. But Muddle didn't know what that something was. It was also—quite obviously — something that Barrel thought Mr. Muddle had done. And only Mr. Muddle knew that—insofar as this morning was concerned—he hadn't done anything.

Unless the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle had been up to something. Unless this was all because of the uninhibited

counterpart of himself!

That was it. Undoubtedly, that was it. But what?

Barrel was still talking.

"This desk, Muddle, I think you will find it comfortable. But if you don't," and here he beamed fondly, "I just want you to say so, that's all. Just say so, and we'll get you another, pronto." Barrel reached for a vase atop the desk. He held it up. "See," he said. "Flowers, roses, we'll see that this vase is filled freshly any day."

Muddle had an idea. He'd find out what was going on, and quickly.

"Where did you find out about it?" he asked Barrel.

"About what?" Barrel forced a wink and a smile.

"You know," said Mr. Muddle, feeling sorry that he didn't himself.

"Why," Barrel said, "at the stock exchange, of course. I got word from over there, when we investigated to find out what was going haywire!"

Muddle had already darted toward the door.

Barrel, face gone suddenly ashen with fear, said:

"Where are you going?"

"To the stock exchange, of course," Muddle shouted. And then he was dashing through the office . . .

WHEN Mr. Muddle arrived at the Board of Exchange Building, he found a tumult of confusion outside. White-coated runners dashed back and forth from the elevators, and men bustled in and out. Some of them smiled, but most looked as though they had lost their minds.

Muddle wasn't able to get onto the stock exchange floor. He wasn't able to do so because he was Muddle, and consequently most unprepossessing to the guards. But he did, at last, find his way into the spectators' gallery which looked over the entire floor of the exchange.

The gallery was jammed, and Muddle almost lost his coat in his struggle to force to the rail. Then he had a clear view of the floor. In an instant, looking at the boards, Muddle saw the reason for the turmoil, saw the reason why Barrel had been so frantic.

The exchange was in an uproar. Every last board reading—with only one or two exceptions—was down to rock bottom. And at the bottom of the rock bottom pile, was the listing of Lock, Stock & Barrel, Investors!

A shot was heard, and a body plummeted past the gallery, dropping in the midst of the traders on the floor. Muddle turned to a white-faced man beside him.

"What's the cause of all this?" he shouted.

"A bear raid. The biggest in history. A speculator named Muddle has put his representatives on the floor. The entire market's shot to blazes."

The white-faced man wheeled.

"Where are you going?" Muddle yelled after him.

"To jump out the window," the fellow screamed over his shoulder.

Muddle didn't have any chance to stop him. He turned back to the boards. Now he knew. The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle was somehow playing the exchange. He'd placed representatives on the floor—but with what? How?

Muddle realized, too, that the word had gotten back to Barrel, and that Barrel—when he saw the beating his company was taking— had figured that Muddle was playing a revenge scheme on him, was ruining the corporation of Lock, Stock & Barrel deliberately.

But where was the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle? This, it was instantly apparent to Mr. Muddle, was the big

problem. He must find him. The minor visions of the Law hunting him down for the punching of Barrel's nose, were a mere bagatelle compared to what now faced him—if he couldn't stop this mad prank of his uninhibited counterpart.

Muddle didn't have to search. For a hand plucked at his sleeve, then another slapped him on the back, in the next instant. He wheeled to face the rakish, Uninhibited Mr. Muddle.

"HI, chum? Sobered up enough to enjoy the spectacle?" his counterpart chortled.

Muddle was frantic.

"What have you done? Oooooh, what have you done to me now?"

Muddle was suddenly—and for no apparent reason—convulsed in gales of laughter.

"It's a scream," he gasped between bellows, "a positive scream." He was shaking so he could scarcely speak.

"What?" Muddle managed to bleat.

"My joke," the Uninhibited Mr. M. guffawed. "Look," he pointed to the floor. "See those fellows out in the middle, wearing white coats, around whom all the other traders are gathered?"

Muddle could only nod.

"Well—" and Muddle's uninhibited counterpart went into more gales of laughter. "I put them down there, for a joke."

"A joke?" Muddle felt like fainting.

"Yes," the Uninhibited Muddle was still convulsed. "I hired them to trade —you know the way they do—with their fingers."

Muddle saw that the men his uninhibited self had hired were, indeed wiggling their fingers wildly back and forth. He shook his head in horror and bewilderment.

"But—" and here the Uninhibited Muddle almost split his sides, *"They aren't trading!"*

"Aren't trading?" Muddle felt himself going mad.

"No, they aren't trading. The other white-coated chumps just *think* that my representatives are trading. But they aren't."

"Then what *are* they doing?" Muddle's voice was almost gone.

"They're talking!" the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle laughed heartily. "That's what they're doing—*talking!*" He became convulsed again.

"Talking?" Mr. Muddle felt certain that he was going insane now. "How can they be talking with their hands and fingers?"

The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle was doubled up in laughter.

"Because," he guffawed, *"because they're deaf mutes!"*

Mr. Muddle staved off certain insanity he felt was closing in on him, staved it off with one more question.

"But isn't there someone on the floor," Muddle screeched, "who would catch on to the sign language?"

His counterpart chortled, slapping his thigh.

"No. They're *Chinese* deaf mutes!"

Muddle glanced down. The Uninhibited Muddle hadn't been lying. The men were Chinese, all four of them! And, suddenly, a gong rang over the floor, followed by instantaneous groans of relief. Trading was over!

AND then a white-haired gentleman with a red face was heading directly toward them. Mr. Muddle plucked the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle's sleeve.

"Let's get out of here, he said quaveringly. "You've turned this place upside down. If they catch us, we'll go to jail."

"Not at all, old boy, not at all." The

Uninhibited Mr. Muddle inspected his nails critically. "We'll see what the old fellow has to say."

Mr. Muddle was tempted to flee, but by the time he had discovered an exit it was too late. The white-haired old gentleman was upon them.

"Gentlemen," Mr. Muddle winced at his voice, stern and commanding, "I would like to talk with you a moment."

"Go right ahead," the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle said suavely, "Always glad to be of service."

"First of all," the old gentleman said, "I should like to congratulate you. Your trading today was the most masterly, most audacious, most amazing exhibition I have ever been privileged to witness."

"Oh, d'you think so?" The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle's voice was bland, "Well, thanks. Nothing like a little financial workout to clear the cobwebs from a man's mind."

Mr. Muddle swallowed with difficulty.

"And," the old gentleman went on, "Here's the proceeds for your—ahem—financial workout, as you call it."

He extended a check and The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle accepted it casually, glanced at it and then stuffed it carelessly into his pocket.

"Thanks, again," he said coolly, "and now if you'll excuse us, my friend and I are rather tired. We're going to be getting along."

"I understand," the old boy said, "but before you leave I should like to say that I have been instructed by the board to offer you a position on our consultation board. The remuneration, I might add, would be very substantial."

"Well," the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle looked thoughtful, "perhaps I can let you know definitely tomorrow. It might prove interesting for a while."

"Thank you, sir. I will tell the board then that they may expect your decision tomorrow."

The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle waved a hand in a nonchalant farewell.

"That's okay," he said. "Let's be on our way, Muddie, old boy."

MR. MUDDLE followed him down the marble steps, too stunned to speak. When he finally managed to flag his paralyzed larynx into action he asked:

"How much was that check?"

The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle looked sad. "I wish I could get you to think of something besides money." He reached his hand in his pocket, pulled out the check, handed it to Mr. Muddle. "Take it," he said. "It'll do for pin money."

Mr. Muddle looked at the check and then he felt himself falling into a pool of blackness. When he came to, the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle was slapping his face smartly.

"What the hell's wrong with you?" he asked genially.

"That check," Mr. Muddle gasped. "It's for four hundred and fifty thousand dollars."

"So what?" his other self inquired.

Mr. Muddle crawled to his feet gripping the check tightly in his fist. He was breathless with excitement and relief.

With this check, with this money, his worries were over. He could meet his checks at the bank, pay off his debts and he didn't need a job now. Never again would he have to bow meekly to Mr. Barrel or let that gentleman use his neck for a footstool.

It was glorious. A delirious feeling of ecstasy swept over him as he felt his troubles dropping from his shoulders.

And then he remembered Nellie!

She was practically estranged from him. His mood of delight passed from him leaving him despairingly desperate. The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle was probably intending to continue the deception with Nellie.

The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle paused for a glass of water and as Mr. Muddle stopped he felt something crinkle in his pocket. It was the first time he remembered the Pepper's Pituitary Pills that he had purchased.

"You know," the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle was saying, "you're not a bad egg at all. The only trouble was that you never paid any attention to me. You kept me so submerged in your cautious meek little personality that I never had a chance to get out and stretch my legs. That is until now."

Mr. Muddle pulled the pills out of his pocket and slipped them from their container. A wild, hectic idea was floating around in his brain. The pills had been responsible for the first change maybe . . .

The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle looked away for an instant and Mr. Muddle dropped the twelve pills into the glass he was holding.

When the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle turned back he was smiling.

"Well," he raised the glass, "here's Muddle in your eye." He tilted his head and drained the glass at a gulp.

Mr. Muddle watched him for a breathless instant and then he shook his head suddenly and rubbed his eyes.

The Uninhibited Mr. Muddle was gone!!

Like a substance reverting to its atomic units his body wavered for an instant and then melted into nothingness. And at the same instant Mr. Muddle experienced a very peculiar sensation. As if a cool, refreshing draft of air had passed over him.

"Yipppee," he yelled, "I'm all alone again."

He thought then of Nell, his money and—and a job with the stock market board if he wanted it.

"Yippppeee," he yelled again.

He executed a tricky little step then right on the spur of the moment and then he raced down the marble corridor to the street. He couldn't get home fast enough.

He waved to a cab and started for it but then he noticed the florist shop and he changed his direction and dashed inside its fragrant interior.

"Everything in the place," he said excitedly to the clerk. "Everything in the place I want shipped to Mrs. Merton Muddle. He gave the astounded young man the address and then dashed out to the cab. His heart was light, his step was brisk and as he neared the cab he was humming a little tune.

"She won't be able to resist me," he said confidently.

The driver swung open the door and in the glass window he had a flashing reflection of his figure.

Hat on the side of his head, impudent smile on his lips, devil-may-care glint in his eyes.

"Funny," he thought, "that looked just like the Uninhibited Mr. Muddle."

FLOWER STUDDED DESERT

IN spite of our usual, standard conception of deserts, it is a fact that the American Desert goes through a period every spring in which primroses, thistle poppies, hollyhocks, lilies, daises, lupines, and heliotrope abound in such great numbers that the visitor walking its sands cannot avoid trampling the profusion of beautiful flora around him. The only occasion in which this amazing phenomena fails to occur are in dry years when the spring rains fail to come. And as an item of national pride it is pleasing to note that only in the American Desert does this phenomena of flowers take place.

SCIENTISTS WANTED

By P. F. COSTELLO

So you think the world is just about as far advanced as it can go, eh? Well, here are a few pointers on what's to do in the future

IN the nineteenth and twentieth centuries our scientists have made undeniable strides in conquering the forces of nature, and utilizing their tremendous energies for the benefits of all mankind. The job has been done so thoroughly however, that it is a source of discouragement to embryonic Pasteurs and Edisons. Our junior scientists have the feeling that there are no new scientific worlds to conquer.

This, of course, is far from the truth. Fortunes and fame await the scientists of tomorrow, more in fact than did his ancestors of the past century. For in spite of all the scientific ingenuity and developments of the past years there are still a great number of troublesome, knotty problems, which, so far, have not been solved.

Industry will make wealthy and famous the men who come to its aid with solutions to these costly, time-wasting nuisances.

For instance, take the common barnacle that attaches itself to the hulls of ships. This marine pest journeys millions of miles every year on the bottoms of our ships and no one has yet been able to make him pay for his ticket. He costs us millions of dollars yearly. The man who outwits him will gain a neat fortune in the process.

Or take the Strange Case of the Cathode Ray. It is a strange potent force, but so far no one has been able to harness it. Some are beginning to think its power is useless but that's a dangerous conclusion. Remember that when Farraday presented a demonstration of electricity to friends for the first time, they remarked:

"Yes, but what earthly good is it?"

Uranium 235, the most remarkable development of this century, is far from being a closed subject to scientists. It is obvious that in the next decades it will be the most potent of forces in the world we know, but before that happy (or unhappy) time many obstacles must be overcome.

Toughest problem facing the scientist who would labor with U235 is the discovery of some means to separate it from the common variety of this element with which it is associated in nature.

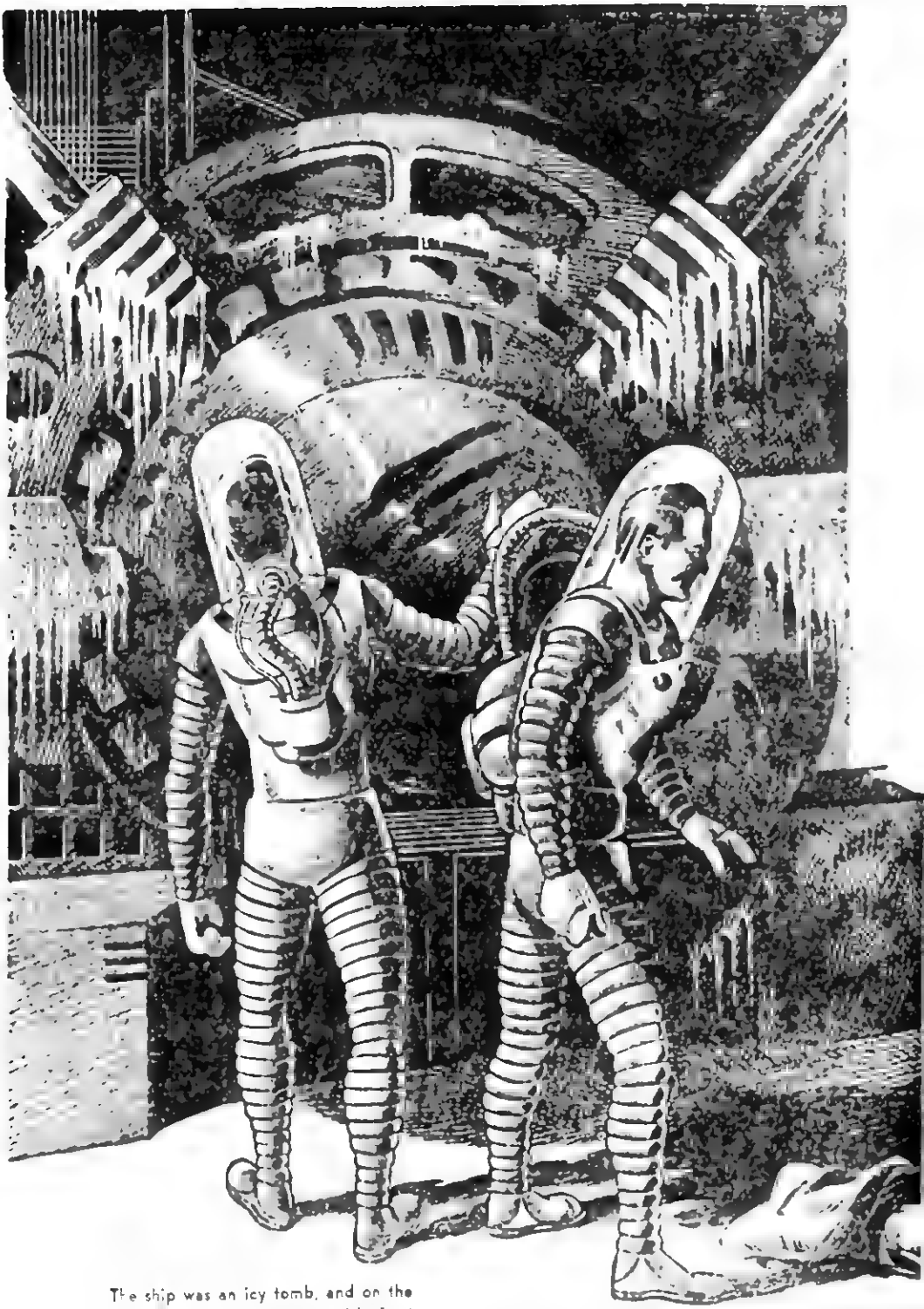
The new fluorescent light needs better materials.

Television needs among other things, a more sensitive camera tube.

And the presidents of airplane factories are begging for some one to discover a method which will make blind landings reliable and feasible.

Last but not least in the list of jobs looking for scientists, is the old dream of harnessing and utilizing the tremendous power which the sun so wantonly throws away each day. Timid steps have been taken in this direction but the job is big enough to require seven league boots.

So hop to it you would-be scientists. There's a million dollars in every test tube if you just know where to look!



The ship was an icy tomb, and on the floor lay bodies covered with frost

You Ought To Be DEAD

by ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS

These still figures were trapped in absolute zero, and they should have been dead! But—

"IT'S like this," Pete Grover said, shaking the gun at Malone. "The *Mary Girl* ain't got no radio op, and of course it ain't so good hopping off into space without a radio op. So the boss says to me will I go out and round up somebody to pound the key for him.

"So I ask around Gates City, and there ain't nobody here who knows what makes a radio tick, except you. And I hear there probably ain't nobody on all Ganymede who knows what goes on inside a radio, except you. So I come to you and I treat you nice."

He shook the gun toward the sheet of paper and the stack of money on the table.

"I say here's five hundred a month to sign articles to pound the key on the *Mary Girl*, with the first month's pay in advance, just like the boss says I should do. And you say you ain't interested, but the boss says he's got to have a

radio op, so—"

He shook the gun at Malone.

Bugs Malone, hunched down on the only stool the shack afforded, dug a hand down in the pocket of his spaceman's leather jacket, and found a cigarette. His lean face, drawn tensely in at the corners of his eyes, showed nothing. He stuck the cigarette between his lips.

The girl who stood rigidly erect just inside the door was pretty, if you liked them that way. She was tall, had vivid blue eyes, and under normal circumstances, a generous mouth.

Just now the mouth was not generous. She was looking around the room, her eyes going from the dirty metal dishes piled on the make-shift sink, to the dust on the unswept floor.

Malone was a lousy housekeeper, she obviously was thinking. When she saw the bottles that had been thrown back under the bed, her mouth tightened still more.

Malone found a match in his pocket. He lit the cigarette.

"Well," he said, "now that you put it this way, I don't see any reason why I should turn down five hundred a month."

He got to his feet.

"Where's your pen? If I'm going to sign articles, I have to have a pen to sign with."

The gun still in his right hand, Pete Grover fished a pen out of an inside pocket with his left. He was clumsy about it. Malone reached for the pen. His hand kept going. It was a big hand, even for a big man, with knotty knuckles, and long gnarled fingers. With the edge of the palm down, it smacked across Grover's fist.

"Ouch!" Grover said, more surprised than hurt. The gun clattered to the floor. Pete Grover looked down at the weapon, then bent to pick it up. He got his fingers on it. Malone stepped on the gun, fingers and all. His fist went *thwuck* against the side of the thug's head. Pete Grover sat down, groaning.

Malone picked up the gun. It was odd, that with all the advances science had made, space flight and everything, nobody had invented a better weapon for close quarters than a snub-nosed bull dog pistol.

PETE GROVER sat up. He tried to feel of his jaw and put his fingers, scuffed by Malone's hob-nailed boots, into his mouth at the same time.

"You reached for the pen," he said accusingly, as if Malone had taken an unfair advantage of him. He was short and heavy set, apparently part bull dog and part ape.

"I sure did," Malone said, grinning. He spun the cylinder, dumped the cartridges out of the gun, put the slugs into his pocket, and tossed the weapon back to its owner. "It makes me nervous, having a gun pointed at me," he explained vaguely.

Pete Grover got to his feet. He wiggled his fingers, to see if they all worked right. They did. He looked at Malone with real respect on his sullen face.

"That's the first time that's ever been done to me," he said. "But no hard feelings, Bugs. No hard feelings."

Malone sat down. He flicked the ash off his cigarette.

"No hard feelings, Pete," he said. "You can run along now, you and your little playmate." He flicked a glance up at the girl.

She hadn't moved. But her eyes were wide open now as she looked at Malone. She flushed a little at his tone.

"You're going to turn down five hundred a month?" she said incredulously. "You're going to stay here in—in *this* pig-pen—" Her eyes enumerated the

dirty dishes, the unswept floor, and the bottles under the bed, "when you could have an honest job?"

Malone's face got hard. The little wrinkles under his eyes spread out in a branching fan.

"I haven't met you, Babe," he said. "Who are you?"

Anger made her really pretty.

"I'm Betty Hardwick," she said. "At present, I'm Grimes Bransom's secretary. And don't call me Babe!"

"Yeah?" This was news, of a sort. Grimes Bransom owned and operated the *Mary Girl*. By looking out the window of his shack Malone could see the *Mary Girl*. She was a dirty-nosed old freighter, long a fugitive from a junkyard. At present she was the only ship in the Gates City space port. She might be the only ship to occupy it for the next six months to come, too. Not many ships landed on Ganymede, and of the few that did, most of them avoided Gates City. It had been a mining camp, but the mines had played out. Now the abandoned mining property and the deserted huts of the miners were occupied by as fancy a collection of cutthroats as could be found anywhere in the Solar System.

Malone's eyes swept over the girl.

"First time I ever heard of Grimes Bransom having a secretary," he said. His tone implied that he doubted it.

She heard the tone. Anger took the color out of her cheeks, left them white. Anger clipped her words into hard little knots of sound.

"Well, I'm his secretary. And that's all. Do you get it? That's all. And you can take it or leave it."

Malone laughed at her.

"If you don't mind," he said. "I'll leave it."

WHAT the hell am I doing this for, he thought. What if she is Bransom's secretary? What if she is something else besides his secretary? What's it to you? Besides, there's no excuse for you throwing something like that in her face.

Aloud he said.

"Skip it, Betty. I shouldn't have said it. I apologize."

He watched her hands, to see if they would relax. They were balled into the hardest-looking little fists he had ever seen. She looked as if she would start swinging them at him any minute. He watched. She was furiously angry. Then she began to realize that he had apologized.

"All right," she said. "We'll skip it. But are you going to take this job as radio operator, or aren't you?"

Malone flicked the butt of his cigarette through the broken window.

"I'm not," he said.

"Why not?" she demanded. "Isn't five hundred a month enough?"

"It's too much," he said. "Three hundred is tops on the best space ships. That's one reason I'm leaving it. It's not the real reason, though."

"What is the real reason?"

"Skip it, Babe. Go hunt yourself up another op. You ought to be able to find somebody here who knows how to rattle a key."

"There isn't anybody else," she said. "It has to be you or nobody."

"You must have had a radio man when you came in last night. What happened to him?"

"He jumped ship."

"Probably a smart boy. Can't you find him?"

"No. We've looked everywhere. He's skipped out."

Malone shrugged.

"So what? You don't have to have a radio man to blast off?"

"Yes we do. Regulations require it. And Mr. Bransom insists we abide by

the regulations."

Malone laughed.

"First time I ever heard that Grimes Bransom gave two hoots in hell for all the regulations that were ever written."

"I—I don't know about that," she faltered. "All I know is we have to have a radio man and you're the only person available. Won't you take the job?"

A little film of moisture had formed on Malone's forehead.

"No," he said.

"Why not? Are the police looking for you?"

"No."

"Then why won't you take the job?"

THE film of moisture on Malone's forehead had grown into globules of sweat. He reached into his jacket pocket for another cigarette. When he brought it out, his fingers were shaking. When he had faced Pete Grover's gun, he hadn't shaken. But he was shaking now. He puffed nervously at the cigarette.

"All right," he said. "It gets me even to talk about it, but you keep asking, so here goes. I'm space nutty. That's what's the matter with me, that's why I'm sticking here in this hole, that's why I won't take the job. I'm space nutty. Do you understand? *I'm space nutty!*"

He rose to his feet, walked with quick, nervous strides across the room. He took two puffs on the cigarette, flung it out the window, and as quickly stuck another between his lips, and forgot to light it. His face had lost its ruddiness. It was gray. Sweat was running down from his forehead. Little nervous muscular jerks ran over his body.

It was space sickness, that terrible disease that occasionally strikes the men who man the ships that fly between the worlds. Purely psychological, it was none the less real and terrible. It hit one man in a thousand, but the man it hit, suffered.

It came partly from the decreased weight in space, and even the use of artificial gravity in the floors of the ships did not prevent the distortion of the internal organs of the human body, resulting often in far-reaching organic changes. But it came mostly from space itself, the black, airless, unutterably frigid space that leered always through the portholes of the ships. Black space, shot through with the intense light from a million flaming stars.

Out in space the stars didn't twinkle. They glared. With no atmosphere to soften and diminish their light, they gleamed like bright, malefic eyes in the void, like unknown, unguessed creatures waiting, always waiting just outside the portholes to gobble up the daring humans who defied their ancient reign. Just looking at space; just knowing it was out there beyond the thin shell of the ship, waiting, forever waiting for the slightest leak in the hull to suck all air out of the vessel; waiting, forever waiting, if the heating units went down, to freeze with a cold approaching absolute zero to distorted icicles the crew, was enough to drive men nuts.

It did drive men nuts. It drove Malone nuts.

Cure? There wasn't any. You just had to stay on the ground, once space sickness hit you, and not get inside a ship, and not think. Sometimes, after you had stayed on the ground a couple of years, you got over it. More often you didn't.

MALONE threw the unlighted cigarette out the window, stuck another between his lips, and forgot to light it too. The girl watched him, her eyes wide with sudden sympathy.

"Oh," she whispered. "I'm sorry. I

didn't know. You poor fellow. Of course you can't sign on as a radio operator or anything else. You have to stay here, in this pigpen, until you get well. I'm sorry. I didn't know . . ."

Malone was grateful for the sympathy. He tried to grin.

"It's okay, Betty," he said. "I'd give my right eye to get away from this." He swept his arm in an arc that included the littered shack. "I'd even take a chance with Grimes Bransom, to get away from here. But you see how it is—"

He spread his hands.

She put both hands on his shoulders.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I really mean that. If we had known, we wouldn't have tried to get you to take the job, would we, Pete?"

She looked over his shoulder at her companion. Malone saw her eyes widen with incomprehensible fright. He heard her scream. The scream was choked off. Something thudded against the back of his skull. He knew he was falling and that the girl was trying to hold him up. Then he didn't know anything.

"The boss said we got to get a radio op," Pete Grover said defensively, slipping back into his pocket the blackjack with which he had struck Malone. "The boss means what he says. So even if this guy is nutty, he's a radio op. So we got to take him along, ain't we? So we got to have a radio op, ain't we? Ain't we, now?"

MALONE awakened to find himself possessed with a headache that threatened to split his skull wide open. Before he opened his eyes, he knew he was lying on a bunk somewhere. A grinding, throbbing, never-ceasing roar was blasting his ear drums. He opened his eyes, and looked straight into the worried face of Pete Grover.

"You dog!" he said from between clenched teeth. He sent an exploratory hand around to the back of his head. There was a bump back there as big as a goose egg. It was a sensitive bump. He looked at Pete Grover.

"We had to have a radio op," Grover said hastily. "Don't be looking at me like that, Bugs. You know how the boss is. He won't take no for an answer." He spread his hands and said placatingly. "No hard feelings, Bugs. You see how it was."

Malone didn't answer. There was a queasy feeling down in the pit of his stomach. He sat up and looked around. He was on a bunk in what was obviously the radio room. A powerful high-frequency transmitter was firmly bolted against the opposite wall. An open cabinet displayed a jumble of spare parts. Set in the farther wall was a porthole.

Malone saw the porthole out of the corner of his eyes. The queasy feeling in his stomach doubled in intensity. He jerked his gaze away from the porthole. The door opened. He looked to see who had entered. It was Grimes Bransom.

Bransom was big, a six-footer, with plenty of weight to go with it. He was wearing a rumpled uniform, and a greasy cap, with the word *Captain* lettered on it, was pulled down low over his forehead, shielding his eyes. A belt was strapped around his middle, supporting a holstered gun.

Malone had never met Grimes Bransom. He had heard about him—plenty. He was a tramp trader, picking up a cargo where he could and delivering it anywhere. Nothing definite was known about him, but the outlaws in Gates City, a tough bunch of hombres themselves, shuddered when the name of Grimes Bransom was mentioned.

"Can you handle a radio key?" Bransom demanded.

Malone's face was greenish gray. He

tried to answer, and choking on the words, nodded.

"What's the matter with you?"

"He's got a little touch of space sickness, Cap," Pete Grover explained.

"A space nut! You damned fool, I send you out after a radio operator and you come back with a guy who's space nutty!" Bransom rasped. His hand went to the gun at his belt.

Pete Grover was no panty-waist himself. But before the glare in his leader's eyes, he quailed.

"He was all there was, Boss," he hastily explained. "It was him or nobody."

For a long second Bransom stared at his lieutenant. Then his hand came away from his gun. "All right," he said. "But the next time I send you after—" He broke off. Without another word and without looking at Malone he walked across to the radio transmitter, lifted the shield on top, reached inside and jerked a small, fixed condenser from its socket. Sticking the condenser in his pocket, he banged out of the radio room.

Pete Grover wiped his forehead.

"Jeeze!" he said. "For a minute, I thought he was going to shoot me. What did he do to the radio, Bugs?"

"He took a condenser out of it."

"A condenser. What did he do that for?"

"So the transmitter won't work until he wants it to work. So I can't get smart and get in touch with the space patrol and raise a kick about being shanghaied. That's why he pulled the condenser. Now get to hell out of here and leave me alone."

"But—"

"I said to get to hell out of here. I'm going to be sick."

IN spite of himself, Malone had looked at the porthole. One look was enough. The instant he looked through the porthole, a grimy greasy sickness hit him in the stomach. That was what space sickness was: fear. Fear of being in space, a horrible nauseating phobia. Fear hits you first in the stomach.

Pete Grover left. Malone staggered to the john. Holding on with both hands, each shuddering discharge of the rockets sending another surge of nausea through him, he was sick. Eventually he crawled back to the radio room. He was trying to pull himself up on the bunk when the door opened.

It was Betty Hardwick. She had a bottle in her hands. Malone looked at the bottle.

"Gimme that," he said. It was Scotch. It set his stomach on fire, but it was better than that horrible sickness. The girl looked at him, her eyes wide with sympathy.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I tried to make Pete leave you on solid ground, but he wouldn't pay any attention to me."

"Go away," Malone said. "Leave the bottle and go away."

Her face hardened at his tone.

"But I want to talk to you."

"I don't want to talk to you. I don't want to talk to anybody."

"But I've *got* to talk to you," she insisted. "Believe me, I didn't know what I was getting into when I took this job. Every man in the crew has a price on his head. You're the only one I dare trust."

"They all say they didn't know what they were getting into."

"I didn't. Listen, you don't have to believe me if you don't want to. I was a member of a theatrical troupe. We went broke on Jupiter, stranded, without a dime and no way to get one. I tried every space ship that came in, trying to get a job, any kind of a job, that would take me back to earth. There

weren't any jobs. I tried Grimes Bransom. He said he was hopping off for earth and I could come along as his secretary. I took it. I didn't know what he was. What would you have done?" She ran out of breath.

Malone was so sick he scarcely heard what she was saying. He helped himself to the Scotch.

"Don't cry on my shoulder."

Betty Hardwick said desperately.

"He lied to me. He isn't going back to earth." She waited for Malone to react. He didn't.

"Is that what you came in here to tell me?"

"No. I came to tell you something else. Do you know what this ship is carrying?"

Malone shook his head.

"It's loaded with guns. I just found out. There's a rebellion brewing on Saturn and Bransom is smuggling guns to the rebels."

Malone didn't say anything.

"But doesn't that mean anything to you?" She was out of breath. "Smuggling guns is illegal. And this ship is crammed to the hatches with them."

"What did you expect to find it loaded with," Malone snarled. "Soothing syrup and teething rings?"

Her face went white with anger.

"Oh, you beast!" she gasped. "You're as bad as Grimes Bransom!" She whirled in a flurry of short skirts that exposed a vision of shapely thigh, and banged out of the room. Malone gulped at the Scotch.

PROBABLY the Scotch saved him from going raving mad. With it inside him, the horrible space fear was diminished. He got stiff drunk and sagged down on the bunk. He went to sleep. It was a drunken stupor, but it was bearable. He awakened from it to hunt for more Scotch.

Time passed. He was vaguely aware that occasionally Pete Grover was in the room, with food, and more Scotch. Pete looked worried. Every time he returned, he looked more worried. Malone vaguely realized that the hammering of the driving rockets had ceased. That meant the *Mary Girl* had established a course. Whatever her next port of call, she was headed toward it.

"More Scotch," he muttered to Pete Grover. Pete fetched the whiskey. He looked more worried than ever. Malone went to sleep.

He was awakened by someone shaking him roughly. He promptly resented this, and struck out blindly. He felt his fist strike something. Then something clipped him on the head in a way that sent his senses reeling. He opened his eyes, and hastily closed them again.

Grimes Bransom was bending over him. It was Bransom that he had struck. It was Bransom who had clipped him. Bransom was getting ready to clip him again. Bransom did clip him again harder this time. Malone went off into ragged unconsciousness.

"Get some water," he vaguely heard Bransom order. "The damned bum is stiff."

Malone had the impression that oceans of water cascaded down on him. He sat up. Strong hands grabbed him, lifted him off the bunk. He felt himself being walked. There was a man on either side and they were walking him. Occasionally they stopped walking him and threw water in his face. This treatment went on for hours, it seemed. Eventually he was able to stand erect and look around him. Bransom was standing in front of him. Bransom had a gun in his hand.

"Get on that radio," Bransom said, waving the gun.

"Can't," Malone said. "It won't

work. You took a condenser."

"The condenser is back now. Get on that radio before I knock the teeth out of your head."

Malone sat down in the operator's seat. He warmed the tubes. He was still plenty unsteady from the Scotch, but this was something he could do without thinking. He was an expert radio man. His fingers found their way without orders from him. Bransom told him what to send. He sent out the call. An answer came. When contact had been established, Bransom gave him a message to send. It was a set of figures from which a ship's course could be plotted. He put it on the ether.

Bransom, using the butt of his pistol, slugged him behind the left ear the instant the message was acknowledged. Malone had no idea the blow was coming. It knocked him cold. He fell off the chair and slid under the radio table. Bransom paused long enough to remove the condenser from the transmitter. Then he left the radio room. He left in a hurry.

MALONE awakened to the realization that somebody was pulling his leg. He didn't know he had been hit. Bransom had been standing behind him and he hadn't seen the blow coming. He opened his eyes and discovered he was looking up at a tangle of wiring under the radio table. While he was wondering how in the hell he had gotten under there, somebody gave another yank on his leg. He looked out and up into the frantic face of Pete Grover.

"Come out from under there, Bugs," Grover begged. "We're in a jam. Come out from under there."

"You talk like I was under here from choice," Malone answered, crawling out. He felt of the back of his head. There were two lumps now.

"Grimes has jumped ship," Grover said, as if that meant something. "He and a couple of his particular pals that he thinks he can trust have jumped ship."

From the way the thug acted, this was important information, but Malone couldn't see it that way.

"Good riddance," he said, still feeling of the lumps on the back of his head. "How did he do it—sprout wings and fly off through the ether?"

"He took the lifeboat," Grover said. "The only lifeboat."

Malone shook his head.

"I don't get it. Any way I look at it, it's good news."

"When Grimes jumps ship, it ain't good news, no matter how you look at it," Grover said dolefully. "Look, Bugs, that dirty devil has double-crossed the whole bunch of us."

"Us?"

"Me and you and nine of the crew. He left us here."

Malone sat on the floor. He didn't know whether he could get up if he tried, so he didn't try.

"I'll take your word for it that it's a double-cross, but I don't see how," he said. "Grimes has jumped ship, leaving us here. So what? We got the ship."

"Use your head." Pete Grover sounded unhappy. "We're carrying guns, ain't we? They're for a bunch of rebels, ain't they? Grimes sets the ship on a course. We're in free space so she'll stay on that course until we use the rockets to set a new one. Grimes makes you send a message, telling somebody what course we're on. Then he jumps ship. Who picks up that message? The rebels!

"They got a space ship too. What do they do? They lay a line to intersect our course. They pick us up, they board us, they take over their cargo of

guns, and what happens to us? They know we know they got the guns. We know how they got 'em. We might talk, if we ever got to a place where we can talk. So they fix it so we don't talk." Making a snicking noise with his tongue, he drew a horny thumb across his throat in a horribly suggestive gesture.

Malone got to his feet. His eyes were blazing.

"That's why he had to have a radio op!" he said. "So he could get a message through to the rebels. But why did he leave you behind? You're working for him."

"I guess he thought he couldn't trust me. Besides the more he leaves behind, the fewer ways he has to split the swag. Bugs, if we don't think fast, we're walking dead men."

Malone didn't begin to doubt the truth of what the other had said. They were walking dead men, all right. Grimes Bransom was living up to his reputation. He had betrayed them.

"The dirty so-and-so!" Malone gritted.

"You must be talking about Grimes Bransom," said a voice from the doorway.

MALONE jumped. He hadn't expected to hear that voice again. It was Betty Hardwick. Her dress was torn in a slit that revealed six inches of leg. She didn't seem to mind. She didn't seem to mind the scratches on her face, either, or the blue ring around her right eye.

"He wanted me to jump ship with him," she explained. "When I wouldn't do it, we had a little argument. It ended with him slugging me."

Malone stared at her. He saw the scratches on her face, the blue ring forming around her eye, the torn dress. His face twisted into a knot.

"Betty," he said. "Sometime remind me to apologize to you, will you?"

She understood what he meant. In spite of the scratches, her smile was glorious.

"Skip it, you big lug," she said. "We got more important things right now. What are we going to do?"

"Do!" Malone echoed. "We're going to start the fuel flowing to those driving rockets and set this crate on a new course so the rebels won't be able to find us. Bransom made a fatal mistake when he left us alive. Probably the rebels won't be able to find us before ten or twelve hours and by that time we'll be on a new course. Do? There's plenty to do! Come on!"

They headed for the engine room. In the long corridor that ran the full length of the ship, part of the crew was gathered. Bransom had shown good judgment in selecting his crew. There wasn't a sound man among them. Wrecks, misfits, drug addicts, wanted men. One was a Greenie, a native of Venus, far from his veiled planet home. One was a brown dwarf of Mars. There were eight of them. Pete Grover had said nine of the crew had been left aboard.

They found the ninth man in the engine room. They also found there a strong odor of whiskey. He was the engineer and his whiskers made him look like a refugee from the House of David. He stared at them distastefully.

"Well," he muttered, through his beard, "What the hell do you vipers want?"

"Start the rocket blasts," Malone said tersely. "We've got to set this crate on a new course and be damned quick about it."

The engineer made no effort to comply with the command.

"Swing into it, man!" Malone blazed.

"There's no time to waste. Start the fuel flowing to the tubes."

The engineer was sitting down. He didn't rise. He reached down beside him and lifted a jug from the floor. The mouth of the jug vanished into his whiskers. His Adam's apple bobbed up and down.

"It's fuel you want running into the tubes?" he said, taking the jug from his lips and wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. "It's the blasts you want going?"

"That's exactly what we want. Get into action, man. Minutes are precious."

The engineer laughed drunkenly. He leered cunningly at them.

"Shure," he said. "Shure. We'll start the rockets. Only what are we going to use for Jerry-rod connectors?"

"What the devil are you talking about?" Malone shouted.

The engineer waved toward his engines.

"The Jerry-rod connectors. They're gone. Bransom took 'em. And I'd like to see you or anybody else make an injector valve work with the connectors gone!"

SILENCE greeted his words, a stunned, heavy silence. In that quietness Malone could hear men breathing. It seemed to him he could also see them breathing, their breath being expelled in white puffs as on a cold winter morning. Bransom had taken the Jerry-rod connectors! The single thought was pounding in his brain. Bransom had seen to it that the ship remained on the set course. With the connectors gone, the injector valves wouldn't work and fuel could not be forced into the firing chambers. The ship, hurtling through the void, could not be shifted from her course.

"Can't we—" He seemed to hear his own voice speaking from a great distance, "can't we improvise some Jerry-rod connectors? Can't we make some that will work for a while?"

For an instant the engineer looked startled. But only for an instant. Then his apathy returned.

"Shure," he said. "We ain't got any spares but we can cut some to shape that will maybe work and maybe will blow us to hell. The job would take eight to ten hours, but we could do it."

"Then do it!" Malone's shout was thunderous. "We'll make some connectors. We're not licked yet. Up, man, we've got a fighting chance! You show us what to do and we'll do it."

A chance! They still had a chance. Malone's hopefulness infused life into the crew. To a man, they cheered. Only the engineer remained apathetic.

"Get going!" Malone ordered tersely. He was aware of Betty Hardwick standing beside him, smiling. Pete Grover was grinning. "We'll give Grimes a little surprise," Grover exulted. "We'll show that dirty so-and-so a trick or two that even he ain't never heard of."

Except to lift his jug again, the engineer didn't move.

"You don't seem to understand," he said. "It would take at least ten hours to make the new connectors. But we ain't got ten hours. We ain't got five hours. We ain't got two hours. The heat's off. Do you get it—the heat is off!

"We're in space. The temperature outside is something like four hundred degrees below zero. This is an old ship and she ain't insulated worth a damn. She's leakin' heat at every pore. In less than two hours it will be so far below zero in here that we will all be frozen stiff as icicles."

There was not a sound in the engine room. The ship sped on through space, and since she was flying free, not a rivet

creaked. Silence, like the silence of the winter's night, when the cold is coming. Cold. Cold. Only this was not the cold of a winter's night on earth. This was the cold of space that was coming, the cold that goes down almost to absolute zero.

Bransom had left nothing to chance. The injector system that fed fuel to the rocket tubes also fed fuel to the heating system. When the rockets were being used, heat to warm the ship was taken from the red-hot firing tubes. But when the rockets were off, the ship had to be heated. Rocket fuel, burning slowly instead of exploding, was fed through the valve injector under pressure to the heating units, from which it was distributed, as a flood of warm air, all over the ship.

If they had been near the sun, radiant heat would warm the ship. But they weren't near the sun. They were out beyond Jupiter, in the utter cold of airless space.

THERE was a row of portholes along the outer wall of the engine room. A flicker of light came through one of them. Malone saw it. His eyes followed it. Out there, not over a couple of miles away, was the ship's only lifeboat. Bransom and his two trusted lieutenants were in it, as snug and as warm as three bugs in a rug, while here, in Bransom's ship, his betrayed crew waited for the cold to come, the cold they were powerless to combat. If they had had time, they might have worked out a way to heat the ship. But they didn't have time. Two hours. Less than two hours maybe.

Malone shook his fist at the lifeboat.

"All right," he gritted. "You've got us licked. But I'm damned if you're getting off free." He stalked out of the engine room.

"Where are you going?" Betty asked.

"To the radio set. There isn't a chance that we can raise help out here but at least we can inform the space control about Grimes Bransom."

She followed him into the radio room. He closed the switches and the tubes warmed. But the transmitter wouldn't work. He soon discovered the missing condenser.

"Bransom has won again," he groaned. Before his face, his breath was white. He looked at the girl. She was rubbing her hands and her breath showed in puffs of white vapor. The cold was creeping in.

In the transmitter, the tubes glowed a cherry red. It was generating radio frequency currents but, due to the missing condenser, the currents weren't getting into the aerial. He looked at the tubes. They were warm, at least. But they weren't hot enough to warm even a man's hands. Nor the hands of a girl. There was energy in the radio set but it wasn't heat energy.

Suddenly Malone's face split into a grin. His shout echoed through the ship.

"What is it?" said Betty quickly.

"A chance!" he answered. "A hope in a thousand, but a hope." His shout brought the crew, including the engineer. He told them his idea. Doubt showed on their faces. They didn't understand.

"You don't have to understand," he snapped. "Get into the main control room and string wires around the wall while I jerk the guts out of this transmitter and work it over. Get going, you mugs. We'll lick Bransom yet."

TWO hours later Bransom brought the lifeboat back to the lock of the space ship. He and his two lieutenants entered. Clad in space suits, they came clumping into the ship. They didn't expect any resistance but they had their

guns out anyhow, just to be safe.

Bransom looked around the control room. Ten bodies were on the floor, in stiff unnatural attitudes. Each body was wrapped and rewrapped in blankets.

"They tried to wrap up to keep from freezing," one of the lieutenants said.

"You can't wrap up against this kind of cold," Bransom answered. "It goes right through."

He counted the bodies.

"Ten of 'em all right. That accounts for everybody. Now when the boys from Saturn intersect our course, we can deliver the guns to 'em and dump these bums overboard. No witnesses left and only three ways to split the gain. Then we'll replace the Jerry-rod connectors, warm up the ship, and blast back to Jupiter. If any nosey space patrol comes poking around, we'll tell 'em we landed at Gates City and the crew jumped ship there. We three flew the ship back to Jupiter. Remember, that's our story and we'll stick to it."

His eyes went around the control room. There was hoar frost inches thick on everything. The thermometer on the wall had quit registering. The temperature was too low.

"They strung some wires around the wall," one of the lieutenants said. "What do you suppose they did that for?"

Bransom studied the wires. They circled the wall and apparently led back to the radio room.

"Probably they tried to use the juice from the radio batteries to rig up a heater. You know, like an electric heater. Hell, that wouldn't work," he said contemptuously. "There's not enough juice in those radio batteries to heat a fly with."

"That's what you think!" a voice said. *"Get 'em, boys!"*

It was the voice of Bugs Malone. It rolled out in a ringing command. Simultaneously the blanket-wrapped corpses on the floor erupted into violent activity. Men came up off of the floor. They came swinging fists and clubs and knives. Pete Grover had a blackjack. The engineer had a wrench as long as his arm. Bugs Malone had a bottle in each hand.

This crew had been betrayed. They had been condemned to the worst possible form of death, slow freezing. Most of them, like Malone, had been shanghaied aboard. They wanted revenge. They wanted to close with Grimes Bransom and his two lieutenants. They wanted his flesh beneath their fingers.

Bransom jerked up his pistol. He fired one shot, but he was so startled at the sight of men who should have been frozen stiff springing into life that he missed. Bugs Malone threw a bottle. It struck Bransom in the glass helmet of his space suit. The glass shattered. He reeled backward. As he staggered, Pete Grover brought his blackjack down over the renegade's head. The blow knocked Bransom unconscious. He started to fall. As he fell the engineer hit him behind the ear with his arm-long wrench.

"SO it wouldn't work, eh?" Malone said to the bound Bransom. Hours had passed. Warm air was flowing through the ship. The missing Jerry-rod connectors had been retrieved from the lifeboat and put back in place. From astern came the comforting thud of rocket discharges as the ship pounded her way in a long arc that would take her back to Jupiter. "You made a mistake, Bransom, when you shanghaied a radio man."

Bransom didn't answer. There was a bewildered look in his eyes. These men ought to be frozen stiff. But they

weren't. They were very much alive.

"I don't get it," he muttered. "You oughta be dead. All of you."

"You will get it," Malone said. "When we turn you over to the space patrol on Jupiter, you'll get it all right."

He was going to enlarge on what the patrol would do to Bransom but Betty Hardwick plucked at his sleeve and drew him away. She took him to the radio room.

"You know," she said breathlessly. "The most wonderful thing has happened. Guess what it is?"

She had taken part in subduing Bransom and his two lieutenants. In the fracas her dress had gotten torn again, but it still covered her.

"I don't have to guess," Malone answered. "We're alive. And believe me, that's damned wonderful!"

"No. I don't mean that. That's wonderful, but there's something else. You've gotten over your space sickness."

A startled expression stamped itself on his face. He looked out of the port. Space leered at him from outside the ship. But it didn't affect him. It didn't make him sick.

"By golly, I have!" he said. "I was so darned busy trying to save our necks that I forgot all about being sick."

He thought about that. It was a good thought. It made him feel good all over. No more space sickness. Now he could get himself another job as a radio op.

"I still don't understand how you saved us from freezing," Betty said. "Those wires you strung around weren't warm. They didn't give off heat. Yet somehow I was warm inside. How did you do that?"

"Oh that. They call it artificial fever.* The effect has been known for centuries. I strung wires around the control room, patched up a condenser, and turned the transmitter into them. The result was we were damned near freezing on the outside but inside we were warm as toast. I'm maybe going to apply for a patent on the idea—a new way to heat space ships."

He scowled at the transmitter, snapped several switches to make certain they were off.

"This darned transmitter is turned off but I still feel like I'm running a fever," he groaned.

Pete Grover stood in the doorway. He had been a silent listener, his eyes going from Malone to the girl. Now he grinned.

"I bet you're running a fever, pal," he said. "I bet Betty is too. But I bet it ain't no artificial fever, pal. I bet it ain't artificial." Roaring with laughter, he slapped his leg.

Betty grasped his meaning and blushed furiously.

Malone also understood his meaning. But he didn't blush.

"I bet you got something there," he said comfortably.

*Short wave radio frequency currents, in passing through the human body, turn into heat.—Ed.

HOSPITALITY, SULTAN STYLE

HISTORY records one of the most fantastic cases of hospitality on record in that extended by Abdul Hamid II, Sultan of Turkey, in 1898. Learning that Kaiser Wilhelm was coming to visit him, he built a magnificent, fabulously furnished palace in Hereke, just for the visit. The Kaiser enjoyed the sumptuous surroundings for three hours—which was the duration of the visit—and from that time on the palace was never used again!

LUNA TALK

WHEN most of us think in terms of lunar equations, and hear vague references to the effect of the moon on our own earth, we don't really appreciate its very everyday actions on this sphere. One example of how very directly the moon can effectively control the earth is seen in the fact that moon tides in the solid crust of the earth make the great city of Pittsburgh rise and fall as much as 23 inches every day.

The Man Who Got Everything

by JOHN YORK CABOT

There was real power in this little box. Its possessor could literally ask for the world on a plate and get it!

WHEN Mr. Gluge rose, he peeked out from behind the shade of his bedroom window and saw that the day promised to be a gloomy one. This filled him with infinite satisfaction, and he went about his dressing almost cheerfully. On gloomy days people couldn't very well smile and simper. Mr. Gluge detested smiling, simpering people. Mr. Gluge was a bill collector.

Where most bill collectors looked upon their calling as nothing more than a job—a means of earning a living, to Mr. Gluge the daily tracking down of debtors was as strong whisky to a drunkard. He collected bills because he loved to. Mr. Gluge exulted every time he could make one of his harassed victims pay, and pay, and pay.

The apartment to which Mr. Gluge went for this morning's collection was far in the rear of a ramshackle tenement dwelling. Mr. Gluge was forced to climb a four-flight walk-up to reach the dirty little room; and by the time he knocked on the paint-peeled door, he was determined that this fellow would get a double-barreled collection treatment.

A white-faced old man, wearing horn-rimmed glasses, opened the door and stuck his head out.

"Yes?" he asked. His voice was as thin as his face.

Mr. Gluge shoved his way into the room, his sharp eyes noting everything in the tiny hovel. A dirty, unmade bed; an electric stove on which sat an empty pot; and on the other side of the room, a long table filled with chemicals, wires, and tubes. Mr. Gluge turned to the white-faced old man.

"You Doctor Homan?"

"I am."

"You owe a bill, long overdue. Allied Chemical Company. Amounts to over a hundred dollars!" Mr. Gluge was glorying in the particularly harsh note he had placed in his voice. Glorying in the trembling that suddenly seemed to affect the old man. The old man sat down on the edge of his bed, as though his legs would no longer support him.

"Well?" Mr. Gluge demanded. He was very good with his emphasis on that word. A question of long practice.

"I . . . I," began the old man, faltering.

"You can't pay, eh?" Gluge broke in.

"Take it," he said with amazing generosity. "I give you the car as a gift."

He looked meaningly around the desolate little room. "Seems obvious," he added.

The old man nodded, swallowing hard.

"No," he admitted. "I'm afraid I can't. If I had a little time, just a few weeks, perhaps a month, I—"

Mr. Gluge snorted.

"An old whine. Won't work. Had plenty of time." He moved, as he spoke, over to the long table on the other side of the room. The old man was watching him fearfully.

Gluge looked at the mess of wires, tubes and chemicals on the table.

"What's this hodgepodge?"

There was a frayed, faint fragment of pride in the old man's voice as he answered.

"My work. My experiment. That's why I say, a few weeks, perhaps a month. It will be completed then. It will—"

He was cut off sharply as Mr. Gluge broke in again.

"This junk?" His voice was scornful. He ran his hand through a litter of papers, then pulled it swiftly away, as though it might be contaminated. "Bah!"

There was really no reason for Gluge to remain. On finding that the fellow couldn't pay, he should have let it go at that. But Mr. Gluge was enjoying himself, immensely. He tarried.

"That little box," the old man said suddenly, "that small square machine on the end of the table. Please let me tell you about it. I hope to make much mon—"

Mr. Gluge's eyes shot to the end of the table. He moved to the box, picked it up.

"This thing?" he scoffed. "Valuable?" Then, suddenly, a crafty gleam came into his eye. "Valuable, eh?" he repeated.

The old man nodded, like a child eager to please a brutal teacher. He got up and moved over beside Gluge.

"Yes, yes it's very valuable. Oh, if you could just give me an extension. I'm sure—"

But Mr. Gluge had tucked the box under his arm. He was smiling unpleasantly.

"For a while," he said, "you had me fooled. I thought you didn't have any possessions. I'll just take this along. We'll hold it for thirty days. At the end of that time it'll be sold, unless you pay up your bill!"

The old man looked suddenly very sickened. His thin hands clung to the edge of the table, as if to keep him from falling. His eyes were wide with horror, and his mouth opened and closed while he tried to find words.

"No," he managed finally, "no, you can't take that!" His voice squeaked hysterically. "It's all I have! I'd never be able to pay you if you took that!"

But Mr. Gluge, smiling a tight smile of triumph, was writing out a receipt. He left the old man with his head in his hands, muttering inaudibly, sitting on the bed. The box was under Mr. Gluge's arm as he stepped out into the street.

IN less than half a minute after that, Mr. Gluge collided heavily with another pedestrian — a fellow who had been walking along, unnoticing, reading a newspaper.

It was all Gluge could do to keep from dropping the box under his arm, all he could do to retain his balance. His face purpled in instant wrath. Here was a perfect way to begin the morning —an exchange of sharp words with a fellow human!

"Damn you, Sir!" Mr. Gluge exploded. "Might pay some attention to where you're going!"

The person with whom he had collided was a short, dapper, moustached fellow. He blinked at Mr. Gluge, and then, suddenly, smiled.

"Sorry, old boy. Wasn't looking, must admit." He fished into his hip pocket, drawing something f o r t h. "Here," he pressed a flat object in the startled Mr. Gluge's hand. Then, before Gluge could open his mouth, the fellow bent his head once more over his paper and moved off down the street. For fully a minute, the puzzled Mr. Gluge watched the man until he was out of sight in the crowds.

Then Mr. Gluge, who had momentarily forgotten it, gave a startled cry and looked down into his hand at the object the other fellow had placed there.

It was a wallet!

For an instant, Gluge was about to shout, to light out after the fellow. But then, his natural instincts getting the best of him, he opened the thing. It was crammed full of bills!

Mr. Gluge swallowed hard, his button eyes sparkling with greed as he counted out the money. Two hundred dollars. Then Gluge fished through the wallet for identification cards. There were three or four. Gluge changed the bills from the wallet in his hand into his own wallet. He had to put the box on the sidewalk to do so. Then he dropped the other wallet, empty but for the fellow's cards, on the sidewalk. He picked up the box and moved on, looking hastily over his shoulder with every ten steps, fearful lest the fellow return.

Two hundred dollars, just like that. Given to him by an utter stranger, a chap he had snarled at! Mr. Gluge, who had collected enough money to have developed an inordinate love for it, was greatly excited.

He was looking over his shoulder for the eighth time, stepping down from the curb to cross the street as he did so, when a deafening, blasting, frightening noise split his ears. Gluge was conscious of brakes screeching protestingly, and then, heart in his heels, he saw that a huge limousine had almost crushed him to the pavement, had stopped less than three feet from his back!

A man was climbing wrathfully out of the back of the long, sleek automobile. A man dressed in a homburg hat, cutaway coat, striped trousers and spats. A big man, with a red face and an impressive gray moustache.

Mr. Gluge stood there stupidly, rooted to the spot by the sudden fear that had numbed him. The box was still clutched in his arm. Gone completely from his mind was the two hundred dollar gift. He was conscious only of the fact that he had just escaped certain death.

The man in the cutaway coat was speaking explosively, wrathfully, his voice bellowing.

"Damned fool. Watch where you're going, why don't you. Blank-blank dob-jazzsted moron!"

BENEATH such obvious superiority in station, Mr. Gluge was the type to quail instantly. And he was doing so, white-faced and trembling, when the red-faced man's t o n e and manner changed. He had approached within three feet of Mr. Gluge, and the hand he raised wrathfully, dropped. He smiled.

"Sorry, Sir. Must have been my chauffeur's fault. Must have frightened you half to death. Terribly sorry."

Mr. Gluge could only g a s p for breath, sure that this was some mad hoax.

"Can you drive?" asked the cutaway-coated gentleman.

Gluge managed to nod.

The cutaway-coated g e n t l e m a n

moved to where his chauffeur sat behind the wheel of the car.

"Get out, John," he commanded. The chauffeur got out obediently.

Mr. Gluge was backing away, box still beneath his arm. He sensed attack. The red-faced tycoon halted him.

"Tut, tut," he admonished. "Don't leave. Here, the car. Take it!"

"Take it?" Mr. Gluge echoed the words in a bewildered bleat.

"Yes," the cutaway-coated gentleman insisted firmly. "Take it. A present. All yours. From me to you. You'll find the keys in the car." He turned to his puzzled chauffeur. "Call us a taxi, John. We no longer have a car."

Flabbergasted, Mr. Gluge watched them move to the sidewalk. Then suddenly hearing a raucous tooting of horns behind the limousine, and realizing that traffic was piling up behind the deserted automobile, he moved mechanically over to it and climbed in behind the wheel.

For three blocks, Mr. Gluge drove his newly acquired limousine dazedly, his face a blank mask of frozen stupor. The square box was still with him, on the seat alongside. Finally, he began to come out of the fog. Two hundred dollars and a magnificent automobile — gifts, from strangers!

Mr. Gluge's sharp mind could be dulled for just so long, and now it was whittling away at this mad enigma. This, he told himself, establishing a basic premise, was not natural, not normal. In fact it was utterly incredible. But deep inside the mind of Mr. Gluge, a certain insatiable avarice was asserting itself, swelling even above the very mystery of the situation.

Whatever had happened, Gluge was wondering, *would it continue to happen?* Excitement pounded in his veins. If it was not mere chance, the million-to-one odds of running into two idiots in succession, then it must have been caused by something. And if he could retain that something, these phenomenal circumstances would continue!

Something — Mr. Gluge frowned. Something—but what?

Mr. Gluge was shifting gears in the limousine, frowning in intense concentration. He threw the car into third speed, and his hand slipped down, touching the square box beside him.

And suddenly Gluge realized — the box!

Why not? Why couldn't it all be blamed on the box, he asked himself. What had happened already was too fantastic to make such a premise out of the realm of possibility. And the old man had said he would have money!

EXCITEDLY, Mr. Gluge whipped the limousine over to the curb, stopping it there. Then he turned his attention to the box, picking it up and examining it carefully for the first time. It was very possible, Gluge realized, looking at the thing, that the little old man had been working on this box without realizing that he had already perfected it. His hands trembled as he opened a sliding panel on the edge of the top of the box.

Looking inside, Mr. Gluge saw wires and batteries and one or two liquid-filled, capped tubes. Just that. He frowned, turning the box over on the other side. There was another panel, a button beside it. The button was in a position that indicated "on." Gluge slid back this second panel, revealing a tiny inner compartment containing — small slips of paper!

Hastily, Gluge withdrew these papers. Bending over, he saw that they were arranged in order, and had been written in a fine, precise hand. Evidently by the old man.

"By psychological ray production

. . . should be able to bring out all . . . better elements in man's make-up . . . should clothe the individual in an aura which would make people 'want to do things for him' sheerly because of the . . . overwhelming impression his personality . . . would make on them. As yet, unable to change the basic nature of the person . . . this can only result in having just the best elements of his nature made apparent . . . every such person having such elements, submerged or otherwise . . . cannot change real character, as yet . . . just makes it appear as if all is splendid in so far as the personality of the man involved is concerned."

There was more, written on the succeeding slips of paper, concerning the box and the old man's work on it. But Mr. Gluge paged hastily through these, his mind thinking of other things. So this *was* it! The old man had been working out this scientific psychological hodgepodge which had somehow been successful. This something-or-other would make people "want to do things" for those affected by the box!

Suddenly Mr. Gluge laughed. The old man could have minted himself a fortune through this, but he hadn't used it because he considered it still imperfect, since it couldn't change basic personality outlooks as yet! And Mr. Gluge laughed again, long, loudly, and most unpleasantly. Somehow, in carrying the box around—possibly when he had been jarred in colliding with the pedestrian—the switch on the side of the box, the little button, had been turned to "on."

And in the middle of Mr. Gluge's laughter, someone opened the door to his car. Opened the door and pushed a dirty, emaciated face inside. It was, Gluge saw instantly, an old woman, her head covered by a ragged shawl. Her voice came piteously to him, muffled, almost inarticulate.

"Please, Mister, I'm hungry. A few pennies—" she trailed off embarrassedly. Gluge saw that she must have been well over eighty, saw her tattered dress and thin, shivering body. He put his hand on the square box, as if to gain reassurance from it.

"Look up," he snapped, "and stop muttering."

The old woman raised her watery eyes, blinking suddenly. Then, a strange expression wreathing her features, the old crone essayed a smile. Her claw-like fingers dug into a frayed purse she carried under her arm, brought forth three pennies.

"Here, Sir," she begged. "Please, please take them!"

Mr. Gluge's laughter was uproarious. He reached out and took the pennies from her trembling hand, shoving her back and slamming the car door shut. Then, as she stood on the curb, smiling bewilderedly, he threw the limousine into gear and roared away.

HIS laughter had died after a block. He felt better, however, than he did before. The incident with the old crone had bucked him up considerably, reminding him of his job and the joy that it had daily held for him.

The bill collecting—there would be no more need for that now. Not that Mr. Gluge hadn't enjoyed it. But pleasurable or not, it had only paid a scant wage. And now he was on his way to millions.

Millions! The word jarred his senses pleasantly. There would be much he could do to enjoy himself with millions. And from this box, he could attain a fortune in no time at all. Ask for things, that's all he'd have to do. Ask for money, ask for fame, ask for great power. The possibilities were unlimited!

Mr. Gluge's greed was itching inside his heart, and he began to think about some immediate acquisition he might make—something by which he could try this new personality power again, profitably. He knew that everything he wanted was waiting for him whenever he cared to take it, and figured that he'd wait until the following morning before really setting out to accomplish his ends.

But as for now, Mr. Gluge was aware that it would be nice to have a little more cash than he had at present. Two hundred dollars and three cents, wasn't enough for a man of his status. Of course there was the automobile, but there was no need to turn it in for anything. Why, he could get all the money he wanted—at a bank!

Mr. Gluge knew of a bank that was less than five blocks away, and turning the limousine around, headed in that direction. It was, he recalled, a rather small bank. It probably wouldn't have a great deal of money on hand. However, he wouldn't want much. Just enough to throw around a bit until the following day. Mr. Gluge's brain was already buzzing with plans for the following day. He would have to make a list, more than likely, of the most important things to ask for. Couldn't waste time asking for trifles.

A little over two minutes later Mr. Gluge parked his limousine in front of the little neighborhood bank he had selected. He took irritable delight in parking before a fire plug, knowing that there would be nothing to fear from the policeman who'd be waiting when he returned.

Climbing out of the car, box beneath his arm, Mr. Gluge marched majestically into the bank. For an instant, as he stood in the white marble lobby, he debated as to whom to ask for the money. He could ask the president. That would be sport. But back in the inner recesses of his brain, Gluge had a deep-rooted fear of important people. His life having been a penny-ante masquerade as a Big Shot, Gluge was rather in awe of the Real McCoy.

And then he had a brainstorm, an idea that was delightful in every respect. He would ask some quailing clerk behind the cages. Not only would he stand a better chance of getting the money, but there was additional appeal in the idea because it would catch the poor devil in a terrible hole when the cash was missed!

Mr. Gluge had a pleasant mental picture of the poor creature trying to explain that he had given, say, five thousand dollars, away to a man who merely asked for it. So looking about, Gluge selected a likely cage and strode over to it. There was no one at the window, so Mr. Gluge stepped up to the clerk without a wait.

THE clerk was a bespectacled, pink-cheeked, earnest young man. Mr. Gluge put a snarl in his voice.

"Hello, my stupid looking young dolt!"

For an instant the clerk seemed astonished, then, as Gluge caught his eye, the young man grinned happily.

"What can I do for you, Sir? Just name it, Sir. Anything at all." The clerk was eager to please. He seemed almost trembling in the fear that Gluge would not let him help.

Mr. Gluge encircled his right hand more firmly around the precious box.

"I want money, you snivelling nincompoop. All you have in your cage!"

The youth beamed.

"Yessir. You bet. I was just about to suggest that maybe you'd like some money!" He laughed foolishly, and swiftly began to toss stacks of currency into a paper bag beside his elbow. At

last he shoved the bag through the grillwork to Gluge.

"That's all I have here. There's more, though. I'd be only too glad to —"

"Go to the devil!" Gluge broke in with intense satisfaction. "I have all I need!" He looked frostily down his nose at the clerk and wheeled triumphantly away from the cage.

And at that moment commotion broke forth!

It came from the far end of the bank, almost a hundred feet from where Gluge stood. Loud shouting, and one or two shots. The noise of the gunfire was still ringing in the vault-like lobby, and Mr. Gluge stood rooted in fear, currency clutched in one hand, the box under the other arm.

Three men in dark coats, light fedoras, and with handkerchiefs over their faces, were backing away from the far cages. Backing away toward Mr. Gluge and the door.

Bandits!

Mr. Gluge's heart was pounding wildly enough to serve as a motor for an ocean liner. His money—what if the bandits saw it. Desperately, he tried to conceal the package behind his back. He would have dashed for the door, but his knees refused to respond to his brain commands. And the bandits were still backing toward him!

It was while he was trying to stuff the paper bag of currency beneath his coat, that Mr. Gluge suddenly stopped short. Why, there was no need for fear. He had been acting on inborn greed rather than common sense. He could always get more money—just by asking for it.

And for the first time in the past minute, Gluge remembered the box beneath his arm. And as he remembered it, an inspiration flashed upon him irresistibly. The box—why, with it he could route the bandits. There was nothing to fear. He would have complete power over them!

Mr. Gluge thought of the beautiful irony of it. He could make himself a hero. He couldn't resist the temptation. Everything was happening too rapidly for further decision. He stepped up behind the closest of the bandits, who was now less than four feet from him. The robber was, with his two companions, backing rapidly toward the door, gun covering everyone in front of him. They hadn't noticed Gluge, yet.

In the split-second that it took Mr. Gluge to act, he realized that the holdup men undoubtedly had someone covering the front of the bank. But he could attend to that fellow later.

Mr. Gluge knew that the eyes of every frightened bank worker and customer were upon him, and he made his voice loud enough to warrant the heroic occasion, tapping the bandit on the back as he bellowed a single strident sentence.

In less than two seconds later, while three guns blasted deafeningly, Mr. Gluge felt hot lead searing through his entrails, and felt himself falling, falling. He was dead before he hit the floor . . .

THE car in which the bank bandits were speeding along the highway took a sharp turn. The man at the wheel spoke over his shoulder to the three in the back.

"Yuh wasn't smart, bumping that guy. Every cop this sidda hell will be on our tail now!"

The bandit in the center of the back seat answered for the other two.

"Jeeeze, we couldn't help it. The guy musta been a loony. Five grand inna paper sack, and we pick it up off his body when he hits the floor."

"What did he look like?" the driver

asked over his shoulder.

"Didn't get no chance to see his face. Wasn't time," said the hood in the center of the rear seat. "We just hear his voice, and what he sez—and we turn and plug him," he explained. "It was just like we couldn't help ourselves."

"Yeah?" The driver sounded skeptical. "What did he say?"

The hood in the back frowned, trying to remember exactly.

"Oh yeah," he said finally. "He sez *'let me have it, yuh swine!'*"

"And yuh let him have it, eh?" the driver said caustically.

The hood in the back nodded.

"Yeah," he agreed. "We sure did. Both barrels!"

RUSSIAN ZIEGFELD

By WILLIAM P. McGIVERN

Here's a strange true amazing story of a Russian who staged spectacles unmatched even today with our modern vodvil science

ONE of the most sensational extravaganzas in all history was staged by Gregory Potemkin to please his mistress, Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia, and incidentally to add considerable luster to his own name. The spectacles of Billy Rose and Florenz Ziegfeld pale into insignificance beside the stupendous sets and casts of thousands, which Potemkin erected and assembled to pay homage to his Empress. For Potemkin's genius was not restricted to a stage or stadium, nor was it confined in any way to the established rules of the theater.

Potemkin's theater was all the land surrounding the Black Sea and all of vast deserts included in southeastern Europe. He created a fairy land in these arid expanses—for a day—and delighted his Empress with the sights of prosperity and happiness which he spread before her. He manipulated whole villages, herds of cattle, armies and forts, just as a skillful stage handler would move furniture and back drops.

The beginning of this fabulous story is found in the simple love of a man for a woman. Such is often the origin and impetus for legendary exploits. Catherine, the Great, and Potemkin were deeply in love and through this attraction Potemkin had advanced to the post of Minister of War. Then, when Russia under Catherine, annexed the Crimea, Potemkin was appointed as Governor of this province, which included all of Southeastern Europe. Potemkin's ambition was stirred and he threw himself into the gigantic task of creating a civilized country from this desert waste with all of his furious energy.

His conceptions were magnificent, his plans and designs were herculean in proportion, but unfortunately the job could not be accomplished by sheer enthusiasm. When Potemkin returned to report to Catherine, he could not bring himself to admit that things were not progressing as rapidly and as happily as he had predicted. So he embroidered the truth here and there and then his imagination got the better of his judgment. He described in glowing terms fields of waving corn, villages of prosperous peasants, vineyards, vast fleets of merchant vessels and warships. In fact, he made the entire area sound so enticing and interesting that Catherine made up her mind to make a trip through Potemkin's province.

Potemkin was horrified. His provinces were barren tumbledown wastes, populated with starving serfs and miserable cattle. The villages and factories and forts which he had been describing existed only on paper and in his nimble brain. In vain did he attempt to dissuade Catherine. She was fifty-eight years of age but her enthusiasm had never been more abundant, her sense of adventure and exploration never keener. Potemkin bowed before the desires of his Empress, the woman he loved. If scenes of prosperity and happiness would please her—it must be done. Scenes of happiness and prosperity must be shown her regardless of difficulties.

Potemkin returned to his province before Catherine, "to make arrangements." Catherine set out in February with a royal retinue of 40,000. Her sledge was a huge affair, pulled by eight horses and with windows on all sides. The interior was fitted with the most luxurious of silks and hand carven furniture. At each station five hundred fresh horses were

supplied to her extensive caravan. Ways were lighted at night by huge bonfires. Villagers had been ordered to repaint their houses, or at least the walls facing the streets. Shrubbery and trees had been transplanted to convey the impression of fertility and plenty and also to screen unsightly hovels and refuse dumps.

Broken-down roofs had been repaired with cardboard which was treated to look like tile. Girls met the caravan, strewing rose petals before it. Villagers were scrubbed and clean, those with worn clothing were hidden in the houses, along with the beggars and the blind.

Catherine had traveled the same route years before and she was amazed at Potemkin's remarkable transformation of the districts from abject poverty to happy prosperity. She was delighted with his work.

At Kiev each guest of her retinue was provided with everything necessary to their comfort. Houses, linens, foods, servants and carriages. All of this was comparatively simple for it merely entailed pressing the serfs into service and confiscating their belongings. Now the difficult phase of the journey was approaching. Catherine was embarking upon the Dnieper and traveling through the arid wastelands of Potemkin's province. Here his critics were sure he would meet his Waterloo. But Potemkin disappointed them.

Seven floating palaces, followed by seventy attendant vessels, comprised the water caravan that drifted slowly down icy waters. The imperial flagship was lined with costly brocades and satins and the walls and the servants' uniforms gleamed with gold. Gold plates were used for table service and goblets of the rarest porcelains and chinas. Here Catherine saw the results of Potemkin's stupendous work.

Lining the shores were villages decorated with huge triumphal arches and strung with wild flowers. Cattle grazed on lush pasturage, troops maneuvered and saluted the imperial barge as it moved slowly down the river. Carefree, gaily-clad peasants sang and danced on the shores, their faces mirroring their happiness and contentment.

Potemkin's severest critics grew silent before these miraculous wonders and Catherine's delight was unbounded.

She did not know, of course, that this fairyland vanished as soon as she passed it, that the houses behind the triumphal were dummies, built without roofs, doors or windows, that the cattle had been brought from miles away to graze before her, that the villages were deserted and that the gay dancing peasants were serfs taught to dance and sing at the end of whips. After the imperial barge had passed these "props" were hurriedly assembled, packed into carts and rushed ahead, like a theatrical traveling company to the next stand, where they were set up again to provide the illusion of holiday merrymaking. The labor and pains involved in these transfers of whole villages, staggers the imagination.

At each of three anchorages along the Dnieper a magnificent new castle had been built, complete with formal English gardens and artificial waterfalls. The formal shrubbery had been transplanted from great distances and withered miserably as soon as the imperial had moved along. Again, houses for Catherine's guests had been constructed, hurriedly and sloppily, but again there were the serfs to act as servants and their belongings to confiscate and strew about to simulate the atmosphere of hospitality and prosperity.

At Ekaterinoslav Catherine laid the foundations for a new cathedral. A new cathedral which would dwarf into insignificance St. Peter's of Rome. Catherine was amazed and thrilled, but of course she never knew that the foundation was all that was ever built.

Traveling now by carriage, the party drove through cities and villages humming with the noises of industry. Bricklaying, roadbuilding, everywhere the streets and shops were crammed with happy, pulsing crowds. No one guessed that Potemkin had literally kidnaped twenty complete communities and transplanted them to these normally barren cities. Amusements were provided of the most bizarre and extravagant type. At one stop an artificial volcano blazed a welcome all night to Her Highness.

At Sevastopol an orchestra of one hundred and eighty musicians played at the reception dinner. Through windows Catherine's gaze traveled over massed regiments and to the bay. This was probably the happiest moment of the trip for the venerable sovereign, for floating lightly with the waves was the new Black Sea fleet.

The cannons blasted a royal salute and cries of "Long live the Empress!" resounded from the throngs in the streets and from the parading soldiers. After this followed the magnificent climax of the whole journey. At Poltava two huge armies clashed together in mock combat, representing the famous victory which Peter the Great had won on the same site.

It was amazing stagecraft, worthy of a master. Everything was sham. The fortress was constructed of sand, the battleships hurriedly thrown together with the cheapest material and most of the cannons were without ammunition.

But Catherine was delighted. Everything she had seen and heard had surpassed Potemkin's description. She even chided him for his modesty in thus playing down his superhuman achievements.

(Continued on page 123)

TAXI TO JUPITER

BY DON WILCOX

This ship was the only one in existence that could travel faster than light, yet another ship overtook them, and it meant unexpected escape for the outlaws. It wasn't right. . .

I WAS scared silly. Any eighteen-year-old girl would have been—even with a big brother like Charlie at the controls. I was too scared to scream.

It all flashed on my eyes so quickly—the three shadowy figures slipping out from behind the rear bunk, advancing, flourishing guns—that I was frozen speechless.

Or almost speechless. I did manage to bluster, "Bandits!" just at the take-off. And that wasn't what I meant to say. But with the take-off knocking the wind out of me I didn't have time to yell, "Stowaways!" much less, "Interplanetary anarchists!"

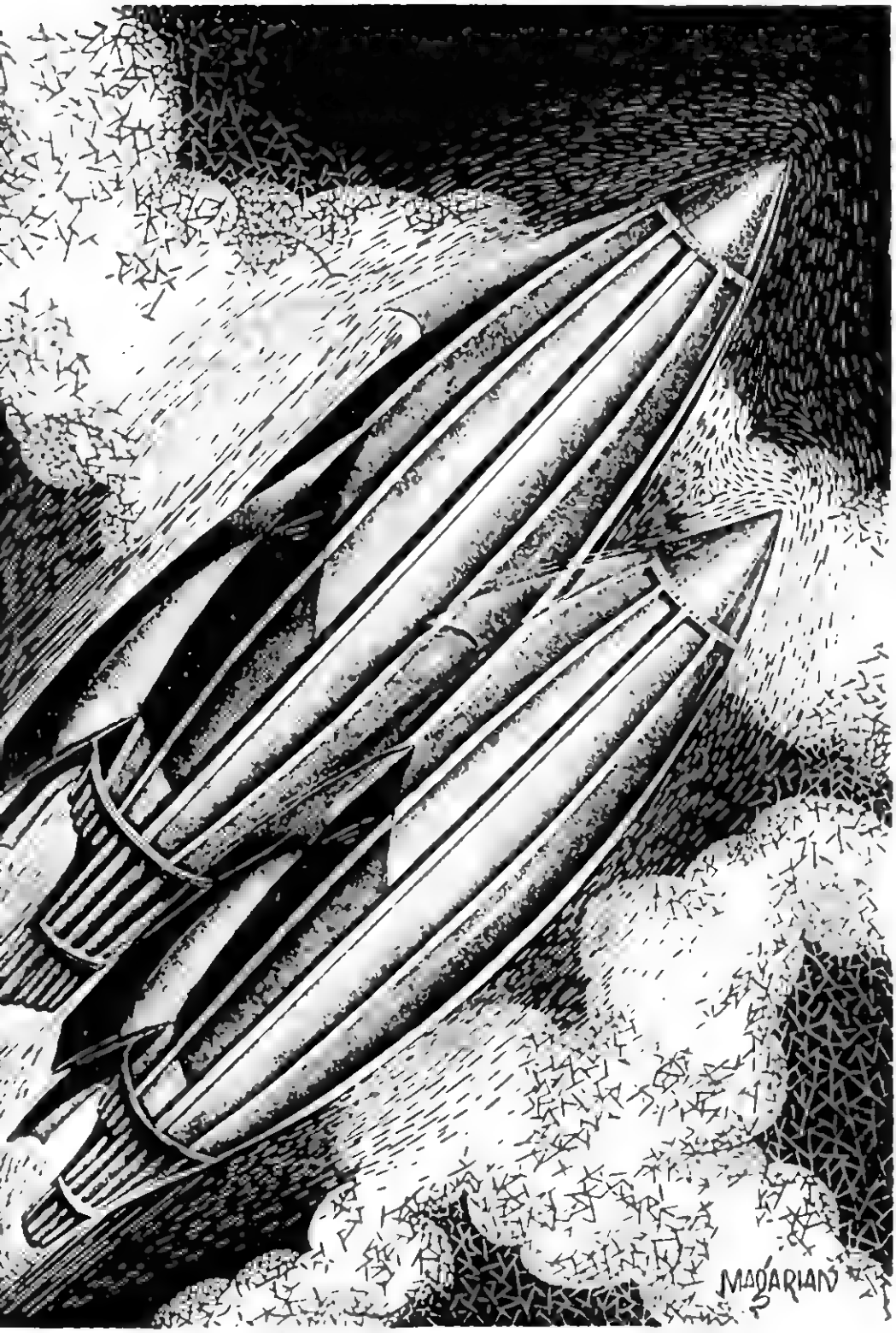
I gave out a blustery "Bandits!" smearing it into one syllable, and the front man of the three made a quick crouch and went "Hssssh!" and by that time my brother Charlie must have jammed on the throttle, because we swooped off so fast that everything went black.

You know that sickening take-off feeling, if you're used to riding the spaceways. Charlie and I were wearing Marlot's Perfect Pressure space suits, latest model, patented October, 2323. The perfect space suit, you think? Ordinarily, yes. But not for the speed boats of the future, such as Charlie's *Nebula Spinner I.*

You've heard of it, of course. And you've heard all the arguments about how much faster than light the *Nebula Spinner I* can actually go, and all the mathematical proofs and disproofs that the science reporters have got themselves mired down in, trying to explain Charlie's invention to the public.

Well, I wouldn't try for a minute to clear up this muddle, because I flunked my course in Einstein, and my final exam probably made the poor fellow turn over in his grave—if he's still in it after four centuries. No, I won't try to tell you *how* the *Spinner* could go so much faster than light; I'll simply tell you what happened on the maiden voyage, and you can see for yourself what it *did.*

As I was saying, we took off from the Earth so fast that the acceleration made us swoon, in spite of space suits.



Two ships now flew side by side in the void—faster than light!

Yes, all five of us—my brother and me, and the three uninvited guests, whoever they were.

"Girl!" I heard a voice growl, as I was struggling to come back to my senses.

"Damn good looker," said another voice. "She'd be good company on Jupiter."

Then things were quiet for awhile, except for the rising hum of motors. I kept trying to get my eyes to open, but I was still dizzy. The Perfect Pressure Marlot was sending little electric thrills through me; it was making a valiant, if automatic, struggle to restore my normal blood circulation.

But my eyes remained closed, my head lopped against my shoulder, I lay frightened and helpless on the gravitized floor where I had fallen.

Pictures raced through my hazy mind —wisps of the recent days of excitement over my brother's triumph.

I could see Charlie just as he had emerged, one early morning less than a week ago, from the air locks of the Giant Vacuum Laboratories, tired but glowing.

"I've done it!" he had shouted to me as he caught me in his arms. "It'll be a revolution in space travel! A revolution!"

That was the triumph he and his inventor friends had been working toward for years, and at last he had put his ship through the test. To all intents and purposes his solo test flights within the Giant Vacuum Laboratories were identical to flight through space itself. And on that morning he had completed his one-hundredth *sun** of test flying.

* The *sun*, as used here, is a unit of distance employed in space navigation, derived from the approximate distance of the Sun from Earth. For mathematical convenience the *sun* has come to mean roughly 100,000,000 miles.—Ed.

THE pictures in my mind shifted to the assemblage of scientists a few days later. Again I was listening to the secretary drone through a report of business proceedings that I didn't understand. Again I was hearing the representative of the Interplanetary Patrol barking crisp jubilant words over the successful drive against the ubiquitous Frobanna anarchists.

"The space pilots have cooperated so well," the uniformed man had shouted, pounding the speaker's table, "that the Frobanna crowd has been driven underground. Once the Frobannas threatened to split interplanetary government wide open. But now, though it has cost us many a good ship and many a courageous pilot, we have practically purged the spaceways of the anarchists. Frobanna himself hasn't shown his face in months. Heaven pity any pilot who takes him aboard!"

It had been a strong emotional speech and had brought down a ringing applause. Then the assemblage had grown respectfully—almost reverently —quiet, for the president of the Interplanetary Travel Federation had risen to bestow a special honor.

Again through my mind's eye that glorious moment surged. The president's lips formed the words, "Charles V. Donaldson." My brother walked to the platform to receive the cup. And then, a few minutes later, we were riding away from the crowd in a taxi—Charlie and I and the cup!

"Now you'll *have* to forgive me, Esther," he had said laughingly, "for taking up inventing instead of law. I'd never have won a cup at law."

"You're fully forgiven," I replied, "on condition that you let me go with you on your first real flight in the new ship."

"It's a deal!"

Charlie's face hadn't betrayed even

a flick of emotion with those words, and yet I knew that back of his quick decision to take me along there were hidden feelings, a host of them, deep and tragic. For my brother Charlie had once taken his sweetheart along on the maiden space voyage of one of his earlier experimental speed boats. His sweetheart had come back a corpse. Charlie, too, had seemed on the verge of death when they bore him out of the returned ship, but miraculously he had lived—lived knowing more painfully and bitterly than anyone else in the world the dangers of faster-than-light travel.

"It's a deal," I had returned to Charlie; and so with masks of confidence that denied the existence of invisible perils, we had entered the good ship *Nebula Spinner I* for the swiftest plunge into the void in the history of Solar man.

Now my hazy reverie grew thin, and the chill of fear sharpened. That harsh growl I had heard before jerked me back to the present.

"Which way you going, buddy?"

MY eyes snapped open. I saw the three space-suited strangers. They, too, had evidently fallen to the floor at the take-off. They were back of me in the narrow passage that extended twelve or fifteen feet toward the rear of the ship. Two of them were trying to draw themselves up from the gravitized floor. The third lay low in the farthest corner, his arms folded over the face of his transparent headgear.

The two larger men eyed me sharply as they rose. I could tell from their motions that they were not wholly unused to the tug of gravitized floors upon space suits. Perhaps they were seasoned space travelers.

Now they looked past me, toward the fore end of the passage where my brother groped at the controls.

"Which way you going, buddy?" one of them repeated.

My brother didn't answer. He didn't even turn. I wondered for an instant whether the auditory instruments in his helmet weren't working. Perhaps he hadn't even seen these intruders yet.

"Donaldson!" the man shouted. His big teeth and pointed nose reminded me of a rat.

"I'm busy!" my brother snapped back without turning.

"Where you taking us?"

"On a test flight."

"Take us to Jupiter!"

My brother was watching them through a small mirror, but he kept his attention on the instrument board. We were still accelerating. Every low hum would slowly rise to a higher and higher pitch like a distant siren whose notes all went up the scale, never down. And before a singing tone would squeak away inaudible, another low hum would start up the range.

The two big men brushed past me. They moved toward Charlie, holding guns on him, staggering dangerously. They gripped the handrails that ran the length of the narrow passage, struggling against terrific acceleration.

"*Jupiter,* Donaldson!" the rat-faced fellow growled, and his snarly voice took an up-scale whine on the words as if the motor tones were getting into his system.

"Can't make it Jupiter," Charlie answered squarely. He turned to face the men for the first time. He looked at their eyes and tried to ignore their guns. They wouldn't let him. Rat-face tapped the barrel of his weapon against the face of Charlie's helmet.

"*Jupiter!*" Rat-face repeated.

"*Jupiter!*" echoed the other big man. I hadn't had a good look at him before,

but now, under the small ceiling lights I got the impression of a muscular form with a small close-cropped head and tiny ears. His neck was so big and puffy with muscles that he reminded me of a cobra. Moreover, there was something snaky about the way he moved.

Between Cobra and Rat-face, my brother was in as tight a spot as you can imagine. As far as I could see there was nothing to do but say,

"Okay, gentlemen, we'll head for Jupiter."

But at the same time I was all icicles for fear he wouldn't say it. I've known Charlie to get rash and let his fists fly at people who threaten him.

CHARLIE glanced from Rat-face to Cobra and then back toward the rear of the passage where the little fellow was peeking from between his folded arms.

"Put your guns away," Charlie said in an easy tone. "I can count to three. I'm smart enough to know when I'm outnumbered."

Rat-face threw a look at me as if to say, No use wasting any fears on that scared kitten of a girl! Then he and Cobra relaxed their gun hands.

"That's better," said Charlie. "Now what's this all about? Who are you? What do you want?"

"Never mind who we are," said Rat-face. "We need some new scenery and we need it in a hurry. From what we've heard of the Charles Donaldson speed boats, you're the lad that can give us the kind of taxi service we crave."

"There's some fine scenery on Venus," said Charlie.

"We've seen Venus. We've seen Mercury. We've seen Mars. We've seen the Earth. We're all fed up—"

"Go ahead and tell him who we are, why don't you?" the snaky fellow said.

"In short," Rat-face continued, "we crave to look upon the hills of Jupiter."

"Jupiter, gentlemen," said Charlie with stubborn tension in his voice, "is out of Earth man's range."

"It isn't out of *your* range!" Cobra snarled.

"It's outside Earth man's legal cruising limits," said Charlie, tightening his lips.

"That's the point," Rat-face grated. "Now get down to business and taxi us to Jupiter!"

Charlie's hands continued to work at the instruments. The invisible sirens of acceleration continued to ascend the musical scales. The two men watched him critically. They cast their eyes over the dials, they glanced at each other. Obviously they were disturbed. There were enough dials on that instrument board to disturb a veteran space pilot.

"Which way *is* Jupiter?" Cobra blustered impatiently.

"Straight ahead," said Charlie.

My anxiety eased a little to hear these words. I was certain in my own mind that these three men were nothing less than Frobanna anarchists, the sort who would be shot on sight if we dumped them at any port within our legal cruising limits. Moreover, I knew that Charlie, in spite of his innocence, would find himself deep in trouble if it were known that he transported them from one planet to another.

The fact that they had slipped into our ship without our knowledge would not exempt us from a legal tangle. It's a crime to transport stowaways, as everyone knows. The usual procedure, of course, is for the ship's officers to lock up the stowaways and transfer them to a patrol ship before landing at the next port. But how are you going to work that if your ship's officers and crew consist of one pilot and his scaredy-cat of an eighteen-year-old sis-

ter—faced by three stowaways with guns!

No, as I saw it, we were sunk unless we could shoot straight through to Jupiter and dump these men. If we could do that, and keep mum about it for the rest of our lives—

"You should be in Jupiter within a few minutes, if you've got any of that light-speed your reporters boast about," Rat-face said, prodding Charlie indirectly for more information.

"We'll be there soon—as close as we can get."

"How soon?"

"In time for lunch," Charlie answered dryly.

"How fast are we going?"

"Almost at the speed of light."

Charlie's answers seemed to content the two big men, but not the little man at the end of the passage. For the first time since our take-off he spoke.

"If we're traveling at the speed of light we should have reached Jupiter two minutes ago."

THE small man's voice sent chills through my spine. It was a voice unlike anything I had ever heard except possibly from a stage—it was as heavy as lumps of tungsten and at the same time as crisp and sharp as tungsten-edged razor blades.

I saw a tinge of uneasiness jump through Charlie's face as he answered:

"Your calculations are correct for straight-line travel. We happen to be traveling in spirals. It's safer."

"Why?" As he spoke, the little man slipped his watch into his pocket and looked up to challenge Charlie's eyes. For the first time I saw his face—the wizened, bushy-browed, sharp black-eyed face of the arch-anarchist—*Frobanna himself!*

I wished I could have gone through the floor. The pictures of Frobanna in the papers had always been enough to make me pale around the gills, especially when there was some fresh story about his stabbings or bombings or assassination plots in the air.

"Why?" Frobanna repeated, drawing himself up by the rail to his full height of perhaps five-foot-four.

I think my eyes were glassy from fright; still, my vision was working. I remember seeing the slight quiver in Charlie's fingers as he removed his hands from the instruments to turn, as far as he could comfortably turn in his strapped-in pilot's seat, to face the most feared and hated man in the Solar system.

"I travel in spirals," said Charlie, "because a slight error on the part of the finest instruments in the world could make straight-line travel fatal. At the rate this ship accelerates and retards, a split second's delay in cutting my speed on so short a hop as from the Earth to Jupiter might be disastrous on a straight-line flight. We could crash to the core of Jupiter without ever knowing what happened."

"We might shoot straight *through* Jupiter as if nothing had happened—" Rat-face's words were cut short by a sharp rasp from Frobanna, but the big fellow seemed anxious to have his say. "Well, that's your own theory, ain't it, Frobanna?"

"Shut up!" Frobanna exploded. "You talk too much!"

"Okay," said Rat-face.

"Now," said Frobanna, brushing his two husky guards back of him and coming up within a step of Charlie, "you travel in spirals, you say, because it gives you better control of your high speed?"

"Right," Charlie replied.

"Suppose we were going to some other system of planets," said Frobanna, assuming the air of a com-

mander, "would you fly us in spirals or in a straight line?"

"Straight line, of course," said Charlie, "but I'd go into a spiral before landing."

"Very good," said Frobanna. "From now on you're our pilot. As long as you obey orders and keep your ship in shape you can be one of us. One false move and you're buzzard-bait, do you understand?"

"Yes," said Charlie.

"Good," said Frobanna.

HE turned his eyes on me, and I had the sensation of being faced with a pair of black-flamed blow-torches. "Who's the girl?"

"My wife," my brother answered.

"Why, Char—" I swallowed my gasping words. Charlie knew what he was doing, of course. I tried to cover up my blunder. "You weren't going to tell, Charlie."

Charlie gave me a curious look.

"This man is Frobanna, dearest. We'll have to tell him whatever he wants to know. We're rather at his mercy, dear. But you needn't be frightened. Frobanna is never disrespectful to women."

"Is *that* so?" Rat-face put in. But Frobanna gave him an ugly look that froze him.

Again Frobanna's blow-torch eyes were on me.

"Get up!"

I clutched the rail and brought myself unsteadily to my feet. The two big guards reached to help me, but I shrank back from them.

"Damn these timid brides," the snaky fellow muttered.

"She might turn out to be good company," said Frobanna. "Some of my best anarchists have been females—"

"Yeah, after she gets over honeymooning—" Rat-face tried to put in.

"Some of my brainiest promoters, I say," said Frobanna testily, "have been females. You dim-witted guards wouldn't appreciate a smart woman any more than you appreciate a smart space pilot. All right, girl, if you're his wife we'll let you string along with us for the present."

"I'll bet she ain't wearing a wedding ring," Rat-face grumbled.

"Let's take a look," said the Cobra.

All three of the anarchists drilled me with their eyes and I must have had deceit written all over my face. But Charlie forestalled their proposed search for a wedding ring. He reminded them that we were all wearing Perfect Pressure Marlot suits for a purpose, and that at our rate of acceleration it would be physically dangerous for me to remove so much as a glove.

That brought Frobanna back to the matter that intrigued him most. How fast were we going? How did our speed compare with that of light? And how soon would we reach Jupiter, spiralling at our present rate?

To all of which Charlie gave highly indefinite answers. This was the first space voyage of the *Nebula Spinner I*, and consequently a dangerous voyage. He would not for the world have taken anyone on this voyage—not even his wife "if she hadn't insisted on going." It was a bad bet, he said, for stowaways, and he wouldn't make any promise that he could get them through to Jupiter alive.

"You'll make it Jupiter," said Frobanna in a manner that was too strong for mere prediction. "You haven't told me what speed you're making. Half of your dials are blanks, and the other half are spinning too fast to make sense. Let's have a little information on these levers. You might get sick—too sick to operate this thing yourself."

"Or you might get injured," said the Cobra, tapping the point of his gun against the ledge of a porthole.

"You might even die," said Rat-face, half grinning through his big teeth.

I DIDN'T see how Charlie could be so calm, but somehow he overlooked all the things they did to antagonize him and went right on talking to them as if he was going to give them every break.

"The best answer I can give you on the speed," said Charlie, "is that we're still accelerating. You can *hear* that. Listen at those hums go up the scale. That's new units of the atomic motor batteries rolling into action. But just how fast we might go if we ever got completely opened up—well, I wish I knew!"

"You'd do well to find out, the sooner the better," said Frobanna imperiously. "As soon as I plant a few eggs in the sands of Jupiter, you're going to take me to some other system of planets. I've got a burning message for the world. The Earth may reject me. Mars and Venus may reject me, and other planets as well. Rumors of my cause may have seeped through to Jupiter, and if so the civilizations there may already be braced against me. But I'll go on! You'll take me on—and on—and on! I'll spread the gospel of down-with-government and up-with-man throughout the skies! And somewhere, sometime, I'll find a people with the intelligence to appreciate—*What happened? What went wrong with the lights?*"

Every light in the ship was off. The darkness had swept in with the swiftness of a wind. I was almost certain that Charlie hadn't touched a switch, for he had been sitting half-turned as if spellbound by Frobanna's outburst of eloquence.

The two guards began to roar.

"What the hell?" "Give us lights!" "Come off that stuff!" "Snap 'em on or I'll blow your face off!"

Their two voices made enough tumult for a dozen men; but their leader quickly put them to silence with a sharp command. There was no voice that could begin to compete with Frobanna's. Little man that he was, he was completely the master—no less so in the dark than in the light.

"Leave it to our pilot," Frobanna said stiffly. "Give him two minutes, and keep your guns on him."

As Frobanna spoke, I was conscious that he was backing away through the narrow passage. I could both hear him and see him—for it was not totally dark. The thin gleams of the distant sun that caught against the panes of two or three portholes streaked inward with faint reflections. The light, what little there was, reminded me of the glints a tiny candle might throw around the corner of a black-walled cave.

I backed farther toward the rear of the ship. My instinctive fear was sharpened. Charlie called back to me. I retorted that I was all right. Charlie's low angry mutter echoed back to me.

"If anyone starts to harm you, Esther, damned if I won't wreck this ship to smithereens!"

At that the guards sputtered and fumed. They weren't going to harm anybody, they said, but they were going to have lights, by heavens, if they had to empty their automatics to get them.

Again it was Frobanna's mystical masterful voice that took command. Frobanna had stopped, halfway down the passageway toward me; and from the bobbing about of his gleaming helmet I knew he was searching among the drawers in the wall.

"Stop your wild talk, all of you," Frobanna champed. "We'll have lights in a minute . . . Here, I've found a flashlight."

"Bring it up!" Charlie called fiercely. "I've got to have light on this instrument board!"

The tensed note in my brother's voice made me quail. I hadn't stopped to think, until this instant, that all those little colored lights across the rows of dials had been swept away too.

"Well, I'm damned!" Frobanna snarled angrily. "Your flashlight's dead as a tombstone!"

"But that's a new flash! Brand new!" my brother protested.

"It's dead, I tell you!"

Crack! In the faint light I could see Frobanna's short arm swing down fiercely to smash the flashlight against the ledge of a porthole.

"Dead, huh?" Charlie grunted.

THE puzzled tone of my brother's comment was the thing that stayed with me the longest out of that confused conversation. I was hazily aware that the anarchists tried lighting matches, but for some strange reason they couldn't get their matches to work. There was more threatening, more accusations of trickery, more demand on Charlie's part for a light; more groans and apprehensive cursings on the part of the anarchists at the prospect of attempting a landing on Jupiter under these conditions.

And all the while we were still accelerating!

Whenever the talk would quiet down, you could still hear those inexhaustible up-the-scale sirens of power.

"All right, we're in for it!" Charlie snorted. "If I can't have a light on these dials, we're gonners."

The three men made no response. The glint from their helmets showed them huddled in a tight conference midway down the passage.

"Hope you aren't gambling too heavy on your theory, Frobanna," Charlie added.

This got a rise.

"What theory?" Frobanna barked.

"That we can plunge squarely through Jupiter if we're going fast enough."

But the three men were again lost in an earnest conference, and all I could get was their overtones of worry.

Through the portholes along the left side of the narrow passageway the planet of Jupiter loomed larger and larger. It was like a mammoth bloated moon. It kept expanding, second by second, into fearful proportions. The men were fascinated by it; their helmeted faces took on a weird aspect under its baleful light.

They took turns at the left-side telescope, trying to make something of its features. Frobanna was especially anxious to detect signs of civilization—it was common knowledge among space navigators that there was a civilization there. But neither Frobanna nor the others could make anything out of their telescope studies. The planet's surface, they reported, seemed nothing more than a whitish blur.

I was not surprised to hear this. Of course I kept mum about it, but I knew as soon as I turned the thing over in my mind that Jupiter was a blur because we were spiralling around in circles so fast.

After all, as I told myself at the time, you wouldn't expect to see much of the *Earth* if you were doing a halo above it at the speed of light—fast enough to circumnavigate it seven times every second! A whitish blur? I should think so!

It surprised me that Frobanna didn't think of this, as applied to Jupiter. But

by this time Frobanna was wrapped up in a fervent anarchist speech. The more he thought of these new worlds to conquer, the less practical and the more eloquent he became. He seemed to turn the management of practical affairs back to his two guards.

Rat-face checked over his firearms in the pale white glow of a porthole.

THE Cobra kept prodding Charlie to know whether there would be enough light to land by. Charlie answered in the negative.

"I'm navigating by guesswork," said my brother in a disspirited tone. "But I'm at the mercy of you men. You've ordered me to go to Jupiter. I've no choice but to obey."

Rat-face came back to me.

"Don't suppose you'd consider parting company with your boy-friend? Or would you?" Rat-face whispered.

"Why should I?" I replied. "If Frobanna is taking Charlie as his pilot—"

"Talk," Rat-face mumbled. "Simply talk. Just a bluff, the same as your boy-friend's fear that he can't land—"

"But Charlie's not bluffing!" I blurted, and with a sudden outburst of terrified sobs I found myself clutching at the arm of that ugly hulking anarchist, begging him to let Charlie turn back. Rat-face didn't exactly ignore my pleadings. He responded by knocking me back against the rear wall.

"You'll get yours right along with your boy-friend," he hissed, *"after he lands us safely on Jupiter!"*

Then hesitating a moment as if debating whether to take one good sock at me, Rat-face added,

"All I can say for you and your man is, you're damned good actors—"

"Come here!" Frobanna called.

Both guards were at his side instantly.

"That ship's drawing closer!" the little leader barked.

"*What* ship?"

"The ship that's been on our trail for the last several minutes," said Frobanna. "Look for yourself."

The guards took turns at the *right-side* telescope. Now I recalled that Charlie had been keeping watch to the right some time earlier, while the others had been engrossed in a study of Jupiter on the left.

I leaned into the ledge of the nearest porthole and strained my eyes. For a long two minutes I saw nothing. But the three men at the right-side telescope grew more excited. The ship was coming closer, they declared.

Then it came to me that a certain speck of light was growing larger. Now and then the speck would vanish momentarily—then it would come back stronger than ever. Gradually it grew close enough to assume the form of a space ship.

"They're keeping up with us!" the Cobra exclaimed.

"That's proof enough that it's no Earth ship pursuing us," Frobanna declared with a hint of triumph in his observation.

"But why the hell *is* it pursuing us?" Rat-face asked.

There seemed to be no answer but silence. Our own ship hummed along at an even pitch. We had evidently ceased to accelerate at last. Gosh, I hoped so! As close as Jupiter was getting, I thought we should be easing down for a landing, if such a thing were possible under these freakish conditions.

But all at once I saw that the reflected light of Jupiter took a turn toward our tail. Charlie must have struck off on a tangent. The big planet went out of the picture. And so did the ship.

"Good strategy!" Frobanna called.

"I don't think it will work," Charlie snapped back.

"Sure it will! You gave him the slip."

"Hell, no!" Rat-face growled. "He's right after us!"

"Well I'll be damned!" the Cobra grumbled. "The slippery devil!"

AGAIN silence. I was all needles and pins. I felt sure that Charlie had jammed on all the speed he thought our ship would stand; and still the other ship raced right along with us, hung parallel to us, less than a mile away! And every second it was drawing closer!

"Where'd they get all that speed?" Rat-face huffed.

"That's one for our pilot," the Cobra muttered.

To my surprise Charlie volunteered a bit of information. He said that what we were seeing was a typical Jupiter transfer ship; and if they cared for a confession, he had patterned his own ship after the Jupiter models. There was no use to try to outrun this Jupiter ship.

On the other hand, there was no use being afraid of it.

"In a minute or two, unless I'm badly mistaken, it will be running along beside us," said Charlie.

"Why?" Frobanna asked sharply. He and his men were gripping their guns solidly.

"That's Jupiter's way," said Charlie. "They're suspicious as the devil—must have an over-developed fear of invasion or something. Anyway, that's the reason our legal cruising limits stop short of Jupiter—"

"It's gone!" Rat-face shouted.

"Gone, your eye!" the Cobra sneered.

"But it *was* gone for an instant—"

"It just flashed its lights off, sap!"

"Probably a signal to us," Charlie commented. "You see, the rule is that if an incoming ship has anything for Jupiter, it must be transferred at the planetary boundaries and delivered by one of these transfer ships. That prevents any outside ship from having to land on Jupiter."

"We haven't got anything to transfer," said Frobanna authoritatively.

"With your permission," said Charlie, "I'd like to transfer my wife—"

"Why?" Frobanna barked.

"To spare her the risk of a perilous landing in our own ship. She can join us later if we have the good fortune to come through. I promise you she'll not speak to anyone in the meantime regarding your mission of anarchy—"

"We haven't any time for transfers," Frobanna said angrily.

The ship was drawing close. From the glint of sunlight on its sleek frame I saw that it was built on the same lines as the *Nebula Spinner I.* Its portholes were aglow with interior lights.

"Are you ready, Esther?" Charlie called to me.

"I told you we can't take time!" Frobanna blazed.

"We haven't any choice in that matter," Charlie replied. "Whether we like it or not, that ship will move up to us and attach itself to our side. For a space of thirty seconds our airlocks and theirs will revolve in synchronized rotation. Are you ready, Esther? You'll have just thirty seconds to get across."

"I'm ready," I replied.

I clutched the handrail at the entrance to the air locks. Frobanna's shadowy form approached.

"You haven't asked my permission!"

The anarchist's voice was the nearest thing to an electrocution I may ever experience, I hope. My words fouled up as I tried to answer him.

"But Charlie said—that is—if *this* boat's sure to crash, and you're always chivalrous to women—"

"I never carry my chivalry too far!" Frobanna boomed.

"It's on us, boss!" Rat-face shouted, his form jerking back from a porthole ledge. Dark as it was, I could scarcely see what was happening. But right on the heels of Rat-face's outburst Charlie shouted at me.

"All right, Esther!"

I COULD hear the airlocks, both left and right, rotating with their high-pressure swish-swish. But something knocked me backward from the entrance, and I knew that something was Frobanna's fist. It was he that dashed through the airlocks at the head of the procession. It must have been the snaky fellow who was second, for the second blow that caught me on the shoulder was a twisting shove of a muscular arm.

By the time the third form—that of Rat-face—dashed for the entrance, I knew enough to leap back.

Swish-swish-swish-swipp! The airlocks stopped.

"Esther!" came Charlie's tense whisper.

"I'm too late!" I cried.

"I know it. I was watching you."

Charlie was coming toward me. The faint streaks of sunlight sprinkled against the front porthole to reveal his silhouette. He had something in his hand—some sort of club. He stopped to listen at the airlocks, heard nothing, and put the club aside.

"Charlie!" I cried, "Don't leave the controls! We might crash—"

Involuntarily I glanced through the porthole on my right and for the space of two or three seconds I saw the other ship pull away from us, then weave back toward us as if to crash. It paralleled us with deadly accuracy. *It slashed into our side!*

I screamed.

"What's the matter, Esther?" Charlie called. I couldn't answer. I was all choked up with terror. I thought we had crashed *and yet we hadn't crashed!* Not *audibly*, at least!

"You're right, Esther," said Charlie calmly. "I'd better pull out of this narrow corkscrew and cut the speed down."

In a moment he came back to me. The motor hums were dying away now, one by one, in a plaintive song of retarding speed. Gradually the monster of Jupiter deflated, for we were ambling back toward Earth at a leisurely gait.

Suddenly our lights came on.

"Now," said Charlie, picking up his club, which consisted of a steel pipe, "I'll make sure we didn't leave any dirt or dust around our doorways."

He started the airlocks to rotating, kept a firm grip on his weapon until he made sure that none of the three stowaways were still lurking within the airlocks.

He tossed the club aside with a chuckle. "No dirt, no dust. We made a clean sweep. And you did splendidly, little sister, splendidly!"

"What did I do?" I asked blankly.

"Pretended you were going to cross to the other ship."

"That was no pretense," I answered. "I *was* going to cross, and I would have if that Frobanna hadn't been so quick with his chivalry—"

"No. You wouldn't have crossed. You couldn't have. *There wasn't any other ship there!*"

"Wait a minute! I'm all dizzy. Say that again—*slowly.*"

CHARLEY repeated his statement, and I grew dizzier. He decided he had our ship retarding too rapidly; but I assured him it wasn't the retarding, it was the talk that was going too fast. I made him start over.

"Well, as soon as Frobanna's cock-eyed theory—that our speed might take

us straight through Jupiter unscathed—leaked out, I saw that physics wasn't his long suit. He was brilliant, but I knew there was a chance to outwit him if I could stumble onto the right trick.

"When the lights went out, I thought I knew why. And when the flashlight and the matches didn't seem to work, I was sure I knew why."

"Why?"

"Because we were running away from their light—our own, too. The light that our ship gave forth was traveling outward in all directions at the rate of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles a second. Wherever a ray of light started, we pulled away from it, because we were traveling at a much higher rate of speed."

I groaned slightly and reminded Charlie that I had once flunked a course in Einstein.

"But if you can tell me how all this caused me to see a space ship that wasn't there, go ahead."

"Okay," said Charlie, looking pleased. "Right away I got the idea. You see, we were traveling in spirals, just as we are now. All the time we seemed to be traveling in the dark, I knew that the lamps at the portholes must be throwing out rays of light into space. Consequently, if we could do a cycle of our spiral swiftly enough—and at a wide enough interval from a given point — we could intercept our own light. Do you see?"

"I think so."

"Do you want me to draw a picture of it?" He sketched an elaborate cork-screw that wound down to finer and finer loops. "There's our path—only you've got to multiply those loops by millions. After we got tuned in, so to speak, we kept catching our light from the previous round. Sometimes I would pull in too closely and the light would have already flown past us. Then the men would shout that the ship had disappeared. But I soon learned to stick to a safe path.

"I kept accelerating, and the faster we went, naturally, the closer we could come to the path of the previous round and still catch our own light. Moreover, I kept drawing the diameter of my loops down smaller until they were as short as the ship would stand.

"By that time the two boats seemed to be almost side by side, and the psychology was right for a transfer."

"Gee!" I gasped. "Do you mean to tell me that when Frobanna and the others stepped out of our airlocks they saw something solid to step on—*that wasn't really there?*"

"Certainly. They saw our left airlocks rotating very invitingly — the same as you saw them from the porthole—almost exactly where those airlocks *had been* only an umptillionth of a second before."

"Then all three of them just naturally walked off the plank—"

"Definitely. As definitely as they had walked off a plank when they first tried to plant their feet on anarchy—"

"Take me home, Charlie," I groaned. "My head's spiralling faster than the speed of light!"

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A FAST-TALKING, modern-thinking young Egyptian sold the Ministry of the Interior on an incredibly streamlined idea. Result was that said Ministry of Interior announced to one and all that electric advertising space was to be let on the great pyramids of Egypt!

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RUSSIAN ZIEGFELD

(Concluded from Page 109)

She never knew the real story of this wonderland that had been created especially for her delight. Had she, she might not have been so pleased. She might have viewed the entire matter in a more pessimistic light. Her journey through the Crimea had cost seven million rubles and the amount of suffering, inconvenience, energy it had caused are beyond computation.

It accomplished nothing—that is, except the further aggrandizement of Potemkin in Catherine's eyes. That, at least, had been successful.

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Sir **ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S** "LOST WORLD" WAS A FANTASY. BUT PERSISTENT RUMORS BEGIN TO INDICATE THAT IT MAY BE CLOSE TO TRUTH.

HIGH IN THE ANDES **MYSTERIOUS LIGHTS** ARE SEEN. ARE THEY THE LIGHTS OF STRANGE CITIES BUILT BY **UNHUMAN BEINGS**? ARE THEY CAUSED BY WEIRD, UNKNOWN SCIENCE?

The LEGENDARY **KRAKEN, OR GIANT SQUID**, HAS NEVER BEEN DEFINITELY PROVED TO EXIST. YET SCIENCE IS UNPREPARED TO SAY IT DOES NOT. THERE ARE TOO MANY EVIDENCES IN ITS SUPPORT.

Mysteries

By JOSEPH J. MILLARD

Life teems in the visible world around us. We know it is there. But are there stranger, more mysterious forms in an unseen world beyond the normal scope of our senses?

DURING the summer of 1940, a man in New England discovered a totally new species of bird. This seems incredible, that a genuine species of any form of animal life could escape the keen eyes of thousands of scientists and trained amateurs for all the years that American fauna has been studied. Yet it happened—and similar occurrences are being recorded every year in some field of study or another.

Modern text books list something like 450,000 known species of insects, a half-million different species of animals and a quarter-million distinct species of plants. Yet science is rapidly reaching the conclusion that "we ain't seen nothin' yet." In fact, there is growing evidence that a whole order of living creatures from the lowliest microscopic forms clear up to man himself, existing on this earth at the present time, has never been recorded or even seen by more than an occasional and incredulous human eye.

In some fields, of course, we know this fact is self-evident. Every year dozens of totally new insect species are discovered and it is considered possible that any keen-eyed amateur who will concentrate on his own backyard may contribute a new species to science. It is thought that hundreds, or even thousands, of undiscovered species are still roaming our fields and woods and swamps.

In the field of microscopy, also, we are only beginning to realize the vast number of species that make up that unseen world. Many exist, as yet totally unsuspected and undiscovered. In many other cases, like the filterable viruses, the existence of species is known even though we have not yet perfected instruments powerful enough to reveal their physical appearance.

These unseen neighbors co-inhabiting the world with us, we more or less accept without wonder. It is only when we are brought face to face with the existence of monster animals and even unknown races of men that the theory becomes well-nigh incredible. Yet we cannot refute the growing mass of evidence.

There is growing evidence, for example, that the impenetrable jungle fastnesses of South America conceal a whole life of their own that the outside world has never seen. Such reports have existed as fantastic rumors for generations, but of late science has been given wings by aviation and is penetrating many of these hitherto unexplored regions to produce proof that the tales are not fantasy but fact.

For example, the largest known species of snake recorded by science has reached a known maximum length of thirty-three feet. But not long ago an expedition headed by Andre Roosevelt, a cousin of the president, penetrated the jungles of Ecuador further than white men have ever gone before. One of their goals was to verify the existence of a species of snake said by the natives to reach lengths of eighty feet or more.

The first Roosevelt expedition did not find any eighty-foot snakes. But they did narrowly escape death at the attack of one that measured more than sixty feet—nearly twice that of previously known species. A new expedition to that same region hopes to bring back actual specimens that reach the maximum length.

THERE are innumerable tales of white Indians of a race unknown to anthropology and of all manner of fantastic beasts, relics of prehistoric times, that still roam the inner jungles of South America. Conan Doyle's amazing story of the "Lost World," while written primarily as a piece of fantasy, was nevertheless based on rumors so persistent that they may yet turn out to be facts.

Some of the most amazing civilizations of all time, like those of the Incas of Peru, the Maya of Yucatan and other even earlier races have tantalized science with the enigma of their complete disappearance. It has always seemed incredible that whole races of people, advanced in science and highly civilized in general culture, could utterly vanish from the face of the earth without leaving a single piece of evidence as to the cause of their disappearance.

A great many scientists wonder if these mysterious races really did vanish. Perhaps, instead, they simply retreated to mountain fastnesses, deep in the heart of South America, where their civilization flourishes today. Native superstitions and the fantastic tales of scattered explorers say that great cities, built by incredible sciences, actually

do exist in the unexplored regions of South America. For that matter, no one has ever satisfactorily explained the weird and mysterious so-called "Andes Lights."

Every summer the unexplored mountain peaks of the forbidding Andes range are lighted night after night by incredible flames. Often great shafts of light spring up from these same peaks to sweep high into the night sky like great, probing searchlights of an unknown race. Many times these lights have been seen from ships, many miles at sea, and a number of well-known scientists have studied the phenomena from a distance in an effort to arrive at a satisfactory explanation.

But it is to the unplumbed depths of the sea that we must look for the most fabulous of all unknown creatures. Literally hundreds of thousands of square miles of ocean lie where no human eye has ever probed or human instrument probed. We know that vast numbers of incredible creatures inhabit this grim environment and the tales of sea serpents cause many scientists to believe that a whole world of life exists unseen in those lightless depths.

In 1825, the famous zoologist De Blainville was called upon to view an entirely new species of whale washed up on the French coast. He was startled to find that apparently this species, named *Aodon Dalei,* existed in the English Channel without ever coming to the attention of man before. Nor has another specimen of the creature ever been found, even to our present time.

In a similar instance, a whale known as *Diodon Sowerbyi* is known and classified by science. Yet only one single specimen has ever been seen and that was one studied by the famous naturalist Sowerby when it washed ashore in Great Britain.

There is also a mass of sound reports concerning a species of sperm-whale, *Physeter tursio,* known as the High-finned Cachalot which is frequently seen around the Shetland Islands. Yet not a single specimen has ever been captured nor has either carcass or skeleton ever been found.

A French expedition exploring the Mediterranean finally confirmed a previous rumor of the existence of a species of whale possessing two dorsal fins. Schools of the strange and unclassified whales were seen—yet again no specimen or part has ever been found. And the same is true of totally unknown type of whale which was seen by an eminent naturalist when a great school of them followed his ship for seventeen hours—and again no skeleton or carcass or specimen has been obtained.

In a number of instances, partly decomposed carcasses of sea creatures belonging to no known species have been washed ashore in various parts of the world. At times, these corpses have fallen into the hands of scientists who either disproved their uniqueness or added new species to the growing catalogs. But unfortunately, in many cases the sea either reclaimed the bodies before they could be secured or there was no one present trained to accurately analyze and classify the species. However, so many of these, even on our American coasts, have been seen by men of unquestionable integrity that science tentatively accepts their existence and waits hopefully for a chance to get its hands on one for laboratory study.

IN the spring of 1885, the Rev. Gordon of Milwaukee, who was then president of the Humane Society of the United States, anchored his boat in New River Inlet on the Atlantic coast of Florida. Upon attempting to raise the anchor, the Reverend Gordon and his sailors brought up a carcass of what they thought must be a sea serpent.

There was no head remaining on the rotting carcass, but the body was forty-two feet long and only six feet in circumference at its greatest girth. It had a long, slender neck six feet in length and possessed two flippers in front. From descriptions forwarded to eminent scientists, it was thought to be a relic of the great *Enaliosauria* long thought to be extinct. Arrangements were at once made to send an expedition to study and preserve the remains.

The Reverend Gordon, realizing the importance of his find, had meanwhile hauled the carcass far up on the shore, above the highest tide-marks for preservation. But before the eager scientists could arrive, an unexpected hurricane swept up from the Indies and when it had passed, the carcass was gone. If the giant sea-lizard *Enaliosaurus* is not extinct, but still living in the depths of the seas, perhaps some fortunate person dwelling along the seacoast may find another carcass of this type and take greater precautions to preserve it.

The famous Kraken, or giant squid which has been the basis of legends almost from the beginning of time, is slowly moving from the class of myth to that of fact. True, no really giant squid has ever been found, but a number of specimens washed up on the shores of Newfoundland indicated the existence of the monsters. One of these specimens was alive, swimming in the bay of Conception.

Two foolhardy fishermen set out to capture the monster. They escaped with their lives and succeeded in hacking off one of the great tentacles from which the squid's size was estimated at an overall length of forty-four feet. A much larger one was attacked, some years before, by a French warship, but not even cannonading seemed to hurt the monster whose weight was estimated at greater than two tons. There is some evidence that the giant squids seen and washed ashore were but small members of the species while the real monsters lurked in depths too great to make detection possible.

These cases could be multiplied almost endlessly to prove, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that a whole world of living creatures is living at this very moment in the same world with us, yet their presence entirely unknown to man.

FORTY years ago, the Okapi, a strange jungle animal, had never been seen nor reported. The two-horned, hairy-eared Indian Rhinoceros was unknown to man until 1868 when it was seen and a specimen captured in Chittagong, India, in a territory where naturalists had been at work for thirty years. In 1898, fresh remains of the supposedly extinct *Mylodon* were found in a cave in Patagonia, though no living specimens have ever been reported.

We know so little of the world around us and have actually explored such a pathetically small portion of its surface that almost anything may be found in the future. There are dozens of impenetrable mountain fastnesses and jungles that could, for all we know, hide whole races of mankind, thriving civilizations and hordes of fantastic creatures unknown to the zoologist's catalogs of today. The depths of the oceans unquestionably conceal a wealth of unknown species. To some researchers, they are even thought to hide the secret outposts of invaders from some far, wet world like Venus who have been landing on earth for centuries.

But whatever the truth may be, we know that much remains to be discovered in the realm of living creatures that inhabit our world. Who knows but what, in some not-too-distant future, we may join hands with civilizations whose advancement is as great as our own, but who have chosen to remain undiscovered until they were ready to come out and meet their neighbors?

« ODDITIES OF SCIENCE »

NAZI SCIENCE MARCHES ON

AMONG the late inventions conceived by state-conscious German gadgeteers is a monocle which permits the patriotically minded Nazis to spy on their neighbors and keep their neighbors from spying on them. To all outward appearances, the monocle is quite an ordinary one. But its value lies in the fact that the glass is mirrorized so that the wearer, when placing the monocle in his eye at the proper angle, can unobtrusively watch what's going on while his back is turned!

OOOMPH IN THE BUG WORLD

ALTHOUGH the ant is generally rated to be pretty close to tops in the bug-world progress, it has to take a back seat to the lowly beetle in at least one respect. The beetle is the strongest living thing in proportion to its weight ever discovered. It can lug a load some 850 times its own weight. A human with proportionate strength would be able to tote a bundle weighing 70 tons!

ODDITIES ORIENTAL

SOME of the practices and customs of the peoples scattered over the face of this earth of ours make us wonder whether anything at all is really incredible. Take for example the dental shops in Siam which featured colored teeth as a special customer lure. Yearly, hundreds of sound teeth are exchanged in these shops for false molars of various hues. A particularly favorite set of dental grubbers among the Siamese, is the complete false set of "all black" teeth, which come in handy to those who chew betel-nut and don't want to show discoloration.

Another favorite in these dental dens is a type of tooth marking patterned after cards. Spades, hearts, clubs, or diamonds are cut into the front of the false teeth, then filled with bright colors to make them quite visible against white backgrounds. Latest innovation in "specials" are molars in which Mickey Mouse, attractively colored, has been cut!

LOCH NESS AGAIN

PRETTY thoroughly discredited have been the tales so popular several years ago concerning huge and horrible sea monsters. However, although witnesses might not have observed quite the sea monsters they described, they might very well have seen actual monster eels, some of which are as thick as eight feet around the middle and more than sixty feet long!

SUGAR 'N SPICE 'N—

AN average man of approximately 140 pounds has enough fat on his bones to make seven cakes of soap, enough phosphorus in him to make 2,200 match heads, enough carbon for 9,000 pencils, iron sufficient to forge a medium sized nail, enough water to fill a 10-gallon barrel, and enough sulphur to rid one dog of fleas.

NASTY CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT

ONE of the most gruesome tribal punishments still being meted out in a so-called civilized world is the general practice of husbands in Waziristan who suspect their wives of infidelity. The punishment to the wives for philandering is the cutting off of their noses. Sadly enough, so many women in this locality were lacking noses, that a shopkeeper in Bannu began importing artificial noses from an undertaking concern in London. He made a landoffice business by selling these noses at twelve dollars apiece to husbands who, on deciding they'd been a bit hasty in their suspicions, desired to give their wives another nose. The only trouble encountered in this re-nosing schedule, was the fact that English nosemakers were producing a brand of nose that—since it was white—looked rather odd against the background of a brown face.

SAILPLANES of the FUTURE

By TIMOTHY V. HOLLEY

The importance of aviation is well realized today, but this pertains to motor ships most of all. Yet, here is an angle that has been overlooked by many

STRANGELY enough, the most promising of all impending developments in aviation is in the science of gliding and soaring, the flight without power which was practiced for many years before the Wright brothers made their first power flight at Kitty-hawk. After the Wrights succeeded in applying power to flight, man forgot all about his efforts to outsoar the birds, and it was not until the Versailles Treaty restrictions pushed the Germans into powerless flight that man discovered he actually could beat the gulls and other soaring birds at their own game.

It was back in 1855 that a French sea captain named Le Bris, who had spent many years studying the albatross in flight, made a glider patterned after that champion soarer and had himself towed into the air. He was far from the first to consider the problem—even Leonardo da Vinci early in the sixteenth century produced plans for a glider and recognized the difference between soaring and wingflapping flight like the sparrow. There were others, too, who perfected models which glided with perfect balance, but Le Bris was the first to glide in his own ship for more than a few feet. Unfortunately, lack of funds and a series of mishaps stopped his development in midstride, and he dropped from the picture in 1867. Others who studied such soaring birds as gulls and eagles made their contributions to theory in the following years, but it was not until 1891 that Otto Lilienthal produced the first practical glider.

Like his predecessors, Lilienthal developed his flight theories from watching birds. Unlike most of them, he did not let lack of power be a stumbling block. At his hilly home in Pomerania he had watched birds hover over ridge currents for hours, and gained some knowledge of the ascending and descending air currents. He concluded that powerless soaring was a practical possibility.

His first glider, of willow rods and waxed fabric, was shaped like a pair of birds' wings and had fixed horizontal and tail surfaces. He would stand between the wings, holding the framework in his hands, and run down hill against the wind. Ascending air currents would lift him from the ground. To maintain stability in the air he would throw his legs from side to side, forward and back. He made flights of nearly 1,000 feet, and developed maneuvering ability until he could make 180° turns, but in 1896 he threw his glider into a stall, crashed, and was fatally injured.

A number of men, on both sides of the Atlantic, carried on his work. Pilcher in England made considerable progress until he was killed flying on a bad day, and Ferber in France made some excellent flights. In America the

outstanding man was Octave Chanute, who first recognized the need for variable controls. With A. M. Herring as assistant he set up a glider camp in the dunes of Indiana on the southern shore of Lake Michigan, and developed a ship with several sets of wings which could be varied in flight. From this he progressed to the biplane, which has immortalized his name by being called the Chanute type. With this biplane Herring and others made more than a thousand safe flights with never an accident; in a few they managed to soar higher than the point from which they launched themselves into the air.

The Wright brothers went on from where Chanute left off, developed wing warping as a forerunner to ailerons, and made many successful flights. Next they added an elevator, and made flights lasting as long as forty seconds. Then they perfected flight with power, and the world forgot gliding. There were a few stunt exhibitors at county fairs, who launched their gliders at high altitudes from balloons, but the art of soaring was still unborn. Only a few German schoolboys, who dropped the sport at the outbreak of the World War, continued to experiment; the record in 1912 was a flight of 2,700 feet that lasted a little less than two minutes.

The Versailles Treaty put severe restrictions on German aviation, and a number of ex-power pilots turned to gliding as a sport. Hampered by the same restrictions, many aeronautical engineers turned to the same field for research in aerodynamics, and by 1920 gliders were making flights of more than a mile. Design began to improve rapidly, angle of glide dropped from fifty to little more than twenty per cent, and controls were improved. The theory of ridge soaring was soon mastered, and by 1922 flights of two and three hours were made. Then came an understanding of thermal current, with the result that we now have distance records exceeding four hundred miles, altitude records topping thirty-two thousand feet, and endurance records of sixty hours and more. And the surface has barely been scratched.

A glider is nothing but a light airplane without an engine—it has the same controls as an airplane except for the throttle. A sailplane is a high performance glider. In practice, the name glider or training plane is usually applied to a motorless ship that has a sinking speed of three to five feet a second while gliding forward at from twenty to thirty miles an hour; a sailplane has a sinking speed of from two to three feet a second while flying at a velocity of thirty to forty, and in some cases as high as sixty, miles per hour. From the moment it is launched in the air, no matter what the altitude, the sailplane starts going down; it can maintain flight only by flying through ascending columns of air.

The first ascending columns discovered were ridge currents caused by wind being deflected upward by a bluff or ridge. On these it is possible to reach an altitude of from five hundred to three thousand feet, depending on the topography and strength of wind. But there are few points where ridges are long enough to permit distance flights; ridge soaring usually is confined to going back and forth in great loops or figure eights, and becomes nothing much more than glorified flagpole sitting.

Then somebody discovered that the thermal currents, which ascend on hot days to produce puffy cumulus clouds, could be ridden upward by a pilot who had skill enough to keep his sailplane in tight circles and stay within the ascending bubble of air. These often rise

to great heights, and the pilot who rides one to the edge of a cloud can glide for many miles before he has to catch another thermal to get his next free ride.

Then came further discoveries: thermals occur in winter, even though they do not produce cumulus clouds. They occur during fairly high wind velocities when there is no cloud development to indicate their presence. There are strong ascending currents on "fronts" where masses of cold air roll down from the north. There are other soaring currents, some of them rising into the substratosphere, on the order of the "Moazagotl" first noticed in Germany, where great rolls of air currents develop which enable a pilot to ride from roll to roll and reach great altitudes. And when a sailplane reached the upper troposphere, there are no practical limits on what the pilot can do.

We know already that the turbulence of the lower air ceases at the stratosphere; the eternal bubbling and shifting up and down ceases just as abruptly as if the troposphere were boiling water and the stratosphere the air above it. Skilled sailplane pilots have soared along the rolling, boiling turbulence of a cold front for hundreds of miles, skillfully staying just far enough in the rising warm wave to avoid the down draft that leads the way. When the same pilots are launched at the top of the troposphere, they can follow the rolling air waves and ride them as easily as Hawaiians ride their surf boards.

The very factor that makes the stratosphere so smooth is the factor that opens limitless possibilities for future sailplanes. At these tremendous altitudes the effects of daily, even hourly, temperature variations at the surface are nonexistent. There are no "highs" or "lows." The air moves in a steady current along lines roughly opposite to those taught as "prevailing" wind currents. At the heat equator there is a fairly constant upward current which begins flowing toward the poles but spirals eastward because of the earth's rotation. Since a sailplane is less dependent on wind direction than any sailboat, a competent pilot could start in Bolivia or Venezuela and ride the air, free of charge, all the way to Africa, or further if he wished. There is a down current at the tropics, where air from the polar and equatorial regions settle to produce our westerly and trade winds. Here is one point where no glider will make distance.

But from the polar regions, where there is rising air, clear south to the tropics, there is an ideal area for sailplanes. Let's start with a load of merchandise in Chicago. We have a sailplane with 600 foot windspread, a load of thirty tons. We are towed into the air by one of the air-tugs of the future, superpowered little planes that will move our heavier craft as easily as tugs move the *Normandie*. We get far enough away from the lake to catch some thermals to help us upstairs, just as tug pilots use currents to help maneuver giant liners. We rise to the base of a lazy looking cumulus cloud; then we cut away because our pilot knows the terrific forces at work in those innocent piles of mashed potatoes. We fight our way through a nearby downdraft, then climb some more. Our pilot, at the limit of his climb, with supercharges roaring and the little ship riding on its prop, signals us to cut loose. Then we begin to soar.

We watch our variometer, calibrated in feet per second instead of feet per minute as in power planes. We sink a thousand feet, feel a thermal and rise

two thousand on its final crest. We are caught in a strong down draft, dive to pick up speed, flatten out and go into the next thermal. Again we reach the lower limits of the stratosphere.

If our destination is Florida we face almost directly into the northwest wind, quartering just enough to slide off to the right at a speed greater than the velocity of the wind. If we are headed for Texas or southern California we turn our tail to the wind, slide through the air at better than one hundred miles per hour, boosted by a tail wind of from sixty to two hundred miles. We can go to Oregon or Canada; we can even progress against the steady wind, but our going in that direction will be slow. When we unload our cargo at our destination we can form part of a long caravan, towed by one plane, which will fly us home at ten thousand feet, aided by the undertow of the same winds that took us on our way.

There will be great sailplane freighters in the future, taking cargoes from North to South America, picking up new loads for Africa, then getting cargoes for Europe. The final leg of the cruises will end somewhere in USA. Goods from China and Japan will soar to the Americas by way of Mexico; return flights will span the North Pacific. Passages across the doldrums, where virtually all air movements are down, will be made by tows, picked up in mid air as easily as airmail is picked up on airmail feeder lines today.

Sailing warplanes of the future will double the terror of air bombardment. Soaring silently through the skies, maneuverable to give pinpoint accuracy in bombing, there is no weapon in sight to combat them effectually. Already the Germans are reported to have developed gliders to improve on their parachutist technic; there are rumors that the giant transports which sloped across Holland without a whisper were really gliders, instead of the airplanes equipped with motor silencers of which we have been informed. In the forbidden areas of Poland they have been practicing their glider tows, one airplane hauling as many as six gliders, each loaded with four men and a complete complement of weapons. On their exact reproductions of sections of English countryside they pick their objectives. The airplanes take them up to thirty thousand feet and cut them loose fifty miles away. Then the pilots glide softly forward and settle quietly on the predetermined spot, ready to capture an airport before the defenders know what is happening, toss a few hand grenades into a vitally important power station, or even bomb targets while gliding on the way to earth.

Windjammers on the ocean disappeared because, except in a few localities, they could not depend upon the winds. Windjammers of the air, sailboats in the sky, will circle the globe in the future as speedily and dependably as our present airline schedules.

THE END

COMING SOON

AS AMAZING A STORY AS YOU'VE EVER READ

THE LIQUID MAN

By Bernard C. Gilford

A NEW NOVEL

A NEW AUTHOR

Meet the Authors

RUMOR has it that I flared into being at 4 10 A.M Central Daylight Saving Time, June 27, 1914 A.D., in a shingle-covered farm house about three miles south of Newberry, in the upper peninsula of Michigan

My mother said I uttered my first word at eight months of age. The word was "Brod," which in Swedish means "Bread," probably an omen that I'd have to work for a living some day.

I didn't walk until I was 22 months old. No one could figure out what the trouble was, but simply let it go as sheer lethargy. I can clearly remember languishing in the baby buggy, waving now and then at passing chickens. But suddenly one day I walked; my folks stuck the buggy in the woodshed; I found that I was a growing person.

R. NEWMAN

Realizing that I was now heading toward eventual manhood, at six years I began making cigarettes out of rolled newspapers. This pretension didn't work out so well, and I tried filling the newspaper cylinders with shredded dried maple leaves, uncooked coffee, or sawdust. The coffee worked best, but Ma worked faster. She objected to my smoking—said I smelled up the house So I postponed my smoking attempts for a few years

At six, I entered the one-room Crandell Country School, so-called because a man named Crandell owned a swamp nearby by that name. My classmates were sturdy sons of Finnish and Swedish immigrants who had come to that part of America to wrest a livelihood from the stubborn soil. The school was Bedlam itself, and whippings with a blacksnake whip were no news. However, my end of it fared through eight years of grammar school, where I did more drawing than anybody else, and often my sketches would get me into grave difficulties with the teacher.

High school was a very dull period for me. I was too sensitive and bashful when I began mingling with strangers and students in the village. I've always felt that if an art course had been offered, I would have been much happier.

College opened a new life for me. Expenses were my chief worry. I worked my share of it, but if it had not been for the generous help of my sister, Alice, I probably would not have been graduated from Albion I majored in fine arts and for a while I thought I'd go into Public School teaching. However, I believed too many of my classmates were training to become teachers simply as a means for a living, and not as a noble cause, so I was discouraged with the idea. I decided to get just a Bachelor of Arts degree, and become a cartoonist. I was graduated and immediately became fit for nothing, technically, in 1938.

After college, I got a job on an advertising paper. I kept at it two months and then moved to Chicago to enroll in a Life class at the Chicago Professional School of Art. I went there for two months and then met our editor, "Rap," no less Rap encouraged me to do some science fiction cartoons for AMAZING STORIES. I scarcely needed any encouragement, because I had been very interested in that type of fiction ever since my high school days.

I sold my first gag cartoon to AMAZING STORIES and will never forget the thrill it gave me. I began selling fast to about 18 publications, mostly trade journals. Then after almost a year in Chicago I had a chance to move East, and I invaded New York. The Big Town didn't seem to notice my presence, but I got along, often haphazardly, which means hungrily. However, I stuck, and began making a living creating cartoon ideas for big name men which is better than trying to sell my own cartoons.

At present I do cartoons for AMAZING STORIES, and am an idea man for two New Yorker Magazine artists and two syndicate strip cartoonists. I am also drawing advertising cartoons, and am employed in Terrytoons animated cartoons.

My side interests are knife throwing; speaking to strange dogs on the street; functional design; coffee drinking; letter writing; improvising classical and swing music on my harmonica; and I'd like to take a fling as World Dictator, but I'd trade even for World Peace.

I am happily unmarried.—*R Newman.*

Science Quiz

The following quiz has been prepared as a pleasant means of testing your knowledge of things scientific and pseudo-scientific. We offer it solely for the pleasure it gives you and with the hope that it will provide you with many bits of information that will help you to enjoy the stories in this magazine. If you rate 50% correct in your answers, you are considerably ahead of the average.

INGREDIENT

In the following quiz, determine which manufactured product utilizes the raw material. For instance Hops are used in: (1) Seltzer, (2) Beer, (3) Pepper. Answer: Hops are used in the making of Beer. Now go ahead and good luck. This question if perfectly answered is good for forty-five per cent. Deduct three points for each mistake.

(1) Iridium is used in Cameras; Fountain pen points, Radiators.
(2) Thermite " " Bombs; Pavement; Life preservers.
(3) Ambergris " " Perfume; Jewelry; Fuel.
(4) Bauxite " " Aluminum utensils; Cardboard; Rayon.
(5) Suet " " Spices; Macaroni; Oleomargarine
(6) Lime " " Whitewash; Roofing; Varnish.
(7) Poppies " " Opium; Aspirin, Sassaparilla.
(8) Kapok " " Bread, Pillows; Crayon.
(9) Chicle " " Ink; Chewing Gum; Mucilage.
(10) Cobalt " " Paint; Mortar; Modeling clay.
(11) Jute " " Tinfoil; Twine; Blankets.
(12) Linseed " " Cotton; Varnish; Mineral oil.
(13) Indigo " " Leather tanning; Fodder; Dye.
(14) Lignite " " Fuel; Microphones; Wire.
(15) Copra " " Incense, Coconut oil; Disinfectant.

NUMBER, PLEASE

"Take a Number from One to Ten" was a popular song of some years ago. We're changing that to from 1 to 300,000. Link the terms in the left-hand column with their number values in the right-hand column. One point for each correct answer.

(1) Molecular weight of water ( ) 1
(2) Specific gravity of mercury ( ) 2
(3) Atomic number of uranium ( ) 2.54
(4) Velocity of light (km/sec) ( ) 11.2
(5) Density of water (lb/ft³) ( ) 13.6
(6) Sine of 90° angle ( ) 14.7
(7) Horse-power (ft-lb/min) ( ) 18
(8) Valence of oxygen ( ) 32
(9) Period of Neptune (sidereal years) ( ) 62.4
(10) Velocity of escape from Earth (km/sec) ( ) 80
(11) Value of an inch in centimeters ( ) 92
(12) Pressure of the atmosphere (lb/in²) ( ) 165
(13) Freezing point of water (Degress Fahrenheit) ( ) 33,000
(14) Heat of fusion of ice (in calories) ( ) 300,000

TRUE OR FALSE?

(2 points each)

(a) Calcium carbide is obtained by heating lime and carbon together in an electric furnace.

(b) Anhydride is a compound derived from another by the abstraction of water.

(c) Isotopes are elements which have different atomic numbers and different properties, but similar atomic weights.

(d) The Lithosphere is the solid part of the earth.

(e) Conversion, a psychological term, is a process by which a wildly expressed idea is supposed to blot out any hysterical symptoms corresponding to it.

A LITTLE ORNITHOLOGY

Perhaps you're the sort of person who haunts the woodlands and calls every feathered chum by his first name. Maybe you aren't. But at any rate, this will show you how much you know about birds. You have but to do your darndest to get 5 points for each of these questions

(a) Which of the following colors are found in the Goldfinch? crimson, maroon, white, yellow.

(b) Which of the following are classified as "Game" birds? Blue-winged Teal, Wood Thrush, Chickadee, Gadwall.

(c) Which of the following are carrion birds, or birds of prey? Osprey, Scarlet Tanager, Redstart, Herring Gull, Great Horned Owl.

(d) Which of the following are songbirds? Osprey, House Wren, Raven, Brown Thrasher.

(e) Which of the following are actually birds? Snipe, Gadwall, Road Runner, Wapiti.

(Answers on page 144)

DISCUSSIONS

AMAZING STORIES will publish in each issue a selection of letters from readers. Everybody is welcome to contribute. Bouquets and brickbats will have an equal chance. Inter-reader correspondence and controversy will be encouraged through this department. Get in with the gang and have your say.

OUR PAL!

Sirs:

Have just finished the May Anniversary issue of AMAZING STORIES and feel that I should give a few words of praise for your magazine. I've been reading your magazine for years, dating almost from your first issue. No definite complaints, just a few minor dislikes (These are few and far between.) Your art work has been becoming steadily better, more and better departments; and fine authors. I've certainly enjoyed the Adam Link series. But then Binder always hits the bull's eye. Also Wilcox, O'Brien, McGivern, E. R. Burroughs; in fact, all the old favorites and most of the new.

Congratulations on your 15th Anniversary and keep up the excellent work.

Dave Hunter,
1125 S. Winnebago St.
Rockford, Ill.

Glad you like us, Dave. We'll keep on climbing the ladder to better and better stuff—Ed.

DON WILCOX—FAVORITE

Sirs:

I am very pleased to see my letter in the May Anniversary issue. The covers were splendidly illustrated by Paul and Fuqua. The back cover gave me an idea. Why don't you continue the series of war on Earth by other planets like Jupiter, Venus, etc ?

Well, now to get to the science fiction stories. Again Don Wilcox tops the list with "The Lost Race Comes Back." It was the best of his other magnificent works. The sad part was when Huntzk and Lindora were killed near the end. It is usually like that even in the present situation. Courageous men like Huntzk are fighting side by side to defend their homeland. (You may omit this.)

"Adam Link Faces a Revolt," by Eando Binder comes in second place with a glorious welcome from me. "The Secret of the Lost Planet," by David Wright O'Brien is a swell action story and deserves third place. The other stories were perfect and so was Joseph J. Millard's short on plant thinking.

I hope you can have a 244-page magazine every time you celebrate an anniversary. I am sure I am not the only one who would appreciate it. I would like to see Nelson S Bond, Manly Wade Wellman and a few other old timers back in your magazine.

F. Heinichen,
152 W. 62nd St.,
New York City.

How that Don Wilcox goes on—toward more and more laurels! We're coming to expect some really great things from him in the near future. As for war on other planets, our cities of other worlds still has some time to run. But thanks for the suggestion. Why should we omit a basic statement such as you made? It was inspired by Wilcox's yarn—and maybe that's his secret of success. He gets down to basic things, underlying realities and emotions, in his stories.—Ed.

HAPPY DAY!

Sirs:

HAPPY DAY!

That May issue—the 15th Anniversary number—is really something to drool over. I had been expecting something special, but I had no idea it would be so swell. When I grasped the magazine off the newsstand, I was delirious with joy. I could scarcely overcome the impression that I was holding two magazines instead of one

Eleven stories, the shortest being novelette length; 7 features plus many articles and cartoons spread through the whole issue! I hate to think that I will have to wait five more years for another issue like that!

How can I pick the best story? You certainly make it hard for me. But I finally decided to choose "The Lost Race Comes Back," but I *still* claim that it can't match "The Voyage That Lasted 600 Years." Boy, was *that* a story! I'll never forget it.

As for the covers the back one was fine, though I would have liked to have seen fleecy white clouds floating in the distance. The solid background of blue seemed depressing. But that's the psychology of color. Paul manages to create a sense of depth, of thickness to his pictures that no other SF artist has achieved. I wish J Allen St. John would put more color and expression on the face of the women he draws. The one on the front cover looked drab.

You made a slight mistake in printing my poem, but that fault was probably my own. I

write a poor hand.

My, my! Can it be that Mr. R.A.F.—I mean R.A.P.—doesn't read his rival magazines? *Eron* is a science fiction artist who draws nothing but tile bricks and faces with pools of shadows. His style is not suitable for AMAZING. Eh, fans?

And lastly—I notice that most of the well-known fans—especially the feminine ones—have SF nicknames. Example: Morojo, Pogo, etc.

Well, my SF title is going to be "Raym." All my correspondents take notice! You can make cuts out of this letter if you see fit, but please print this part.

Extra cartoons very much appreciated.

Raym (Raymond Washington, Jr.),
No. 1 Flo. fan,
Live Oak, Fla.

Thanks for the information concerning Eron. As for reading, we don't even have time to read the papers. Is there a war on?—Ed.

A DISAGREE'R

Sirs:

I've no crow to pick with you about your anniversary issue, but I want to disagree with a couple of your readers.

First, there's R.M., conscientious objector to love-angles and slang. The love-angles furnish the human interest in most stories where they appear. Where would Millard and Steber's "Lone Wolf of Space" be if Larry Buford hadn't got steamed up over the Martians' snatching of his girl? Since love is one of the basic human emotions, why should it be banned? On the contrary, bigger and better—especially better—love-angles are in order

Then there's this slang business. Stories, no matter how fantastic, must be realistic to be plausible. Descending from the pristine idealism of your correspondent to yours truly's murky realism, let's consider the problem scientifically. Can R.M. fluently read Chaucer or the Saxon scribes? Were he to read this—"Witodlice eft se Haeland cwaeth to him: Ic fare, and ge me secath, and ge sweltath on eowre synne: ne mage ge cuman vder ic fare" would he understand it? Similarly, wouldn't this be unintelligible to him—"He sed therfor aghen untu them, Ai go aue, and yu shal sik mi, and shal dai in yur sin; wher ai go, yu me nat cum."

It's not double talk, but an English passage, the first written by an 11th century Saxon, the other as it might be written by a 22nd century American. It would be nerve-racking for both author and reader were dialogues to be written in the natural medium of the speakers.

I can imagine myself deciphering the Cro-Magnard which would then have appeared in Wilcox' "The Lost Race Comes Back."

And now for Bill McFarland, who doesn't like time travel stories. On a question like this, of course, every man's opinion is his own. But for the sake of argument, I'll say that to me they are one of the best forms of science fiction They usually portray the reaction of a man of a given period to the unfamiliar environment of a strange era. As such, they demand ingenuity and an understanding of psychology on the author's part.

Incidentally, some interesting angles might be a future hero's travel into Venusian or Martian history. (And, by the way, why do many writers have to make the inhabitants of other planets look like creatures from a weed-smoker's nightmare? It may be human conceit, but I like to think of Martians and Venusians as being formed much like humans. Green or purple or sky-blue pink hides are O.K.—but why eight legs and arms or noses a foot long? Are they supposed to serve a special purpose?) To return to time travel, another plot might be woven around a character who made trips into the past to verify points in history. His research, I imagine, would be well financed by the books he could write.

John Workman,
Dayton, Ohio.

Well, readers, how about it? Agree or no?—ED.

WORKMAN AGAIN—ON ADAM LINK

Sirs:

To say that I like "Adam Link Faces a Revolt" would be a masterpiece of understatement. I don't think the humans would have caused any trouble had Jed Tomkins, rather than Sam Harley, been mayor. If Harley had continued his reactionary agitation, he could have been deported. Government, as well as money, would be superfluous in such a community as Utopia

"I was just passing by, so I thought I'd drop in and tell you that I have lightning under control."

City. That's why their introduction caused so much trouble. Frank Steele should have been dismantled as soon as his ambition became self-evident. For the humans, it was a case of adaptation. Adam was wise when he made a clean cut between the old system and the new. When he made concessions to reaction, he laid the groundwork for failure. He had left out all environmental factors contributing to friction. But he hadn't considered human—and robot—ambition. To a student of sociology, Binder's story is a good argument for change. But then it had to end as it did, to avoid incensing the 100-percenters.

By the way, can you tell me where I can get information and literature on Esperanto? I'd appreciate a note in "Discussions."

John Workman,
Dayton, Ohio.

Write to Forrest J. Ackerman, 236½ N. New Hampshire, Hollywood, Calif., for information concerning Esperanto. He's a leading Esperanto fan in this country.—Ed.

MORE ABOUT PYRAMIDS

Sirs:

The thing that has prompted me to write is your articles about the pyramid. One thing I had always respected your magazine for was unbiased scientific opinion. All your stories and articles are or seem to be based on some scientific fact. Your publication of the article on the pyramids I consider a violation of this policy for if there was anything based on religious fanaticism or fancy that is it.

The whole story of the pyramid would not have gained the importance it did if it had not been for the fact that about 1883 the United States was looking for a standard upon which to base our measurements. At the time it was being debated whether we should adopt the French "meter-system" or the English "yard-measure." The pyramid theory was then brought forth in all its detail to substantiate that the English units were absolutely accurate, and that these units were handed down to us by an almighty God and therefore could be the only units that should be accepted.

That the pyramid theory was thrown out and the metric system adopted came about when the measurements and calculations concerning the pyramid were proven false. Professor Piazza Smyth, an English divinity student and archeologist, although not the founder of the theory, was one of its greatest proponents. Practically all modern books on the subject, written mainly by men of the Church, are based on the findings of this man. What Prof. Smyth claimed to be and what proved to be are two entirely different things.

Prof. Smyth went to Egypt three times and each time came back with different measurements of the pyramid. His dimensions also did not meet those of other archeologists. The result was that he met quite a bit of opposition at the start. To try to settle his difficulties for once and for all he had a set of measures made and went to Egypt a fourth time. The measures he took with him were claimed to be the most accurate made in his day and still his measurements did not come out the same. In fact, his dimensions did not jibe with his theory at all and he was inclined to throw them out. Smyth's measures were as accurate as scientifically possible but Smyth failed to use scientific methods of obtaining his dimensions and as a result all the mathematical functions he had worked out failed to meet the measured dimensions. In order to get figures to fit his problems averages were used. Although the measurements varied by different archeologists as much as TEN FEET the average dimension came close to the one proposed by the theory and the resulting "error" was tossed out as being inconsequential.

The pyramid, being in the condition that it is now, no accurate measurements can be taken and those that come near accuracy are far from those needed by the theory. In his article in the April issue Mr. Millard states that one of the "prophecy marks" occurs at April 7, A.D., the day that Christ was crucified. It should be made plain to all that it is not known exactly what day this event took place and there is a variance of seven years among the authorities on this one point. The date April 7, as given by the pyramid measure, can only be accepted as a SUGGESTED date of this event. Again, if the dates April 7 and November 11, 1918, can be measured so accurately when each INCH REPRESENTS ONE YEAR, why are the dates August 4-5, 1914, March 3-4, 1945, and the 1558 so indefinite?

That the pyramid inch should equal our present-day inch would be merely a coincidence because the inch we use has varied greatly through the ages. The whole theory is based first and last upon this inch and since that inch has never been accurately established the theory cannot hold true.

Alfred B. Sylvanus,
15715 Trafalgar,
Cleveland, Ohio.

P S.—Anyone interested in reading up on an argument against the pyramid theory, I suggest the report read before the American Meteorological Society on December 29, 1883. It is in the Library of Congress and copies may be obtained at almost any public library. The report was published in 1884 and was given by Frederick A. P. Barnard.

Many thanks for your well-thought-out letter. You deserve a big hand for saying your "say" so vigorously, and if any other readers have anything to add, go to it. Joe Millard can take it, and an article that causes a lot of comment is what we like.—Ed.

WHAT IS THIS? EVERYBODY WRITING TWO LETTERS?

Sirs:

A few other things that I would like to comment on: I think that all the stories turned out by the authors that have their biographies published along with their stories, have all been excellent. Why they haven't gotten better ratings by your readers is beyond me. I thought "The Synthetic Woman" one of the most delightful stories I have ever read and it didn't appear in any rating that I saw. Between you and me I'd like to meet and marry such a girl described in the story. In my imagination she was perfect. "Treasure Trove in Time" was another excellent story and it didn't seem to rate. The ones in your later issues—March and April, I don't think quite came up to the standards of the others, but they are among the best in the magazine It's possible that I read a story from a different angle than other folks Being interested in the motion picture and television industry I always try to picture the stories in that form and the two mentioned above would make good movie stories. Why the industry doesn't realize the possibilities of such tales is hard to understand as I am sure many a S F fan is anxiously awaiting more pictures like "The Lost World."

Being in the art profession I am always critical of your illustrations. To me you only have two artists in your organization and they are Krupa and Paul. Of course, J Allen St. John is the best but I understand that he is not a permanent member of your force. Why not make him so? The only fault I find with him is that he sometimes strays from the subject (which I will explain later). Paul does excellent work on the back cover, why not let him do a few inside illustrations too? Krupa's work in color has not been so good, but his black and white illustrations are above par for this type of a magazine Krupa has a fault though in getting little inaccuracies into his pictures. For instance, in "King Arthur's Knight in a Yankee Court," where did he ever get the idea that knights wore the armor he has pictured? That armor looks more like early Egyptian or Roman, not 16th century England. A little research work would improve his pictures tremendously. These men I consider the aces of your force. As for Fuqua, I think I can draw an illustration every bit as good as his and I consider myself a poor illustrator. It may seem harsh to criticize severely, but in my opinion, Fuqua is getting worse instead of better. His figures are very poorly drawn and his compositions don't come up to Krupa and Paul

Now for that "straying from the subject." Why don't your artists read the stories they illustrate and stick to the story when they do make an illustration? A few examples: in Phoney Meteor, the "bugs" didn't have a door in the

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fantastic ADVENTURES

ON SALE AT YOUR NEWSSTAND JUNE 20

meteor—they had to blast their way out. In Raiders of Venus the rocket ship was located outside the stadium—not in it In Lost Colony of the Superstitions, the television screen does not show burning wells—in the story. In Hok and the Gift of Heaven, the battle with the shark takes place at night and under stilt houses located out in the water. I always judge a story by the illustration that goes with it. An illustrator has the same responsibilities as stage designer He has to stick to the author's demands. An artist does not design a stage setting and then re write the play around his setting. He would have an entirely new play and the same would hold true for an illustrator. Think it over.

Alfred B. Sylvanus,
15715 Trafalgar,
Cleveland, Ohio

Yes, we have trouble with our artists and their temperamental quirks! They insist on changing the scene to suit themselves—and sometimes your editor forgets to change the story! So, we beg your pardon, humbly, and promise to try to repair our evil ways—Ed.

ANOTHER SMASH HIT

Sirs:

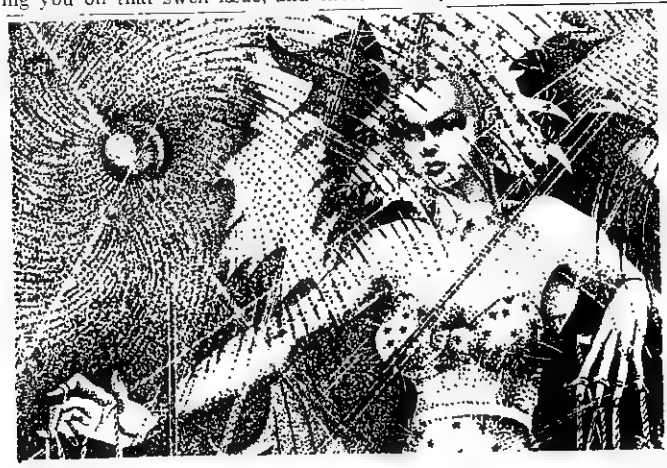
This is the first time I have ever written to AMAZING, but I just had to tell you how much I enjoyed your special Anniversary Issue. I suppose you'll have hundreds of letters congratulating you on that swell issue, and those won't pass the wastebasket, but here I am writing anyway.

Reliable Don Wilcox turns out another smash hit in his "Lost Race" time story. The front cover was another swell one by St. John and Paul's back cover was up to his high standard.

Well, here's how I rate your stories:

1. "The Lost Race Comes Back"
   (Wilcox at his best)
2. "The Secret Of The Lost Planet."
   (O'Brien's worst deserves much credit)
3. "Adam Link Faces A Revolt."
   (Binder, no more)
4. "Return Of The Space Hawk."
   (Hooray, Farnsworth hit a good one)
5. "The Lone Wolf Of Space"
   (With that combinnation, couldn't miss)
6. "Dictagraphs Of Death"
   (Good short story)
7. "Rocky Gordon's Billion-Dollar Trap"
   (Whew, what a title)
8. "Iron Men Of Super City."
   (Interesting)
9. "The Man Who Forgot."
   (Cabot's shorts always fair)
10. "The Strange Adventure of Victor MacLiesh."
    (More like a movie mag)
11. "The Fate Of Asteroid 13"
    (Keep McGivern on humor)

Alden Verity,
Beverly Hills, Calif.



Enchantress of Lemuria!

by

Stanton A. Coblentz

Here is the master work of a master story-teller! Even Coblentz's "The Sunken World" is outdone in this new story of a world far beneath the earth's surface, and a weird, enchanting girl who rules the destinies of its subterranean reaches. By all means don't fail to read this fantastic masterpiece in the September issue.

SEPTEMBER ISSUE

AMAZING STORIES

ON SALE JULY 11!

ACTUALLY LIKES AMAZING

Sirs:

Boy-oh-boy, what an issue!!! However, here's a brickbat: some of the yarns stunk. More about that later.

A certain Mr. Marlow wanted you to get Eron for AMAZING. Gad! You leave Eron alone. In case you do not know him, he's an "artist" in a SF mag. Does he stink!

I insist on larger type. Our eyes must be considered.

Maybe I'm crazy, for I actually *like* AMAZING. Every other fan whom I know says that AMAZING stinks. They are correct in more ways than one. BOOST SF!!!

I notice that pulp writers actually succeed in slicks mags. August Derleth (of weird fiction) has a short weird in *Coronet*. LEAVE PAUL OFF THE FRONT COVER.

Paul's back cover terrific, but why use him when you have KRUPA available?

I demand McCauley on the cover. He is, in my estimation, the finest artist in SF.

Fandom is growing tired of Adumb Link. Why doesn't Binder write another yarn like "Five Steps to Tomorrow"?

The cover stinks. (Excuse me), St. John. Get Rogers.

For news of the entire SF and fantasy field read FFF News Weekly; 6 for 25c from Unger.

Adumb Link's Utopia idea stinks. The U.S.A. is Utopia. (Oh, yeah!)

Cartoons are terrific.

Other fans here in Muscatine think AMZNG is the top mag. Haw!

I think that AMZNG and *Fantastic* should both publish "Annuals."

Go bi-monthly.

Voice of the Midwest,
Harry Schmarje,
318 Stewart Rd.,
Muscatine, Iowa

Well, you certainly have definite opinions. We smile a bit at your sly hint about your fellow fans. Who ever said they didn't like AMAZING? *They've got to have something to pick on, and we have personally asked them to hate us just so they read us. But between me and you, ungrammatically, they really like us, just as you do, but like to write hot letters to your editor. Great kidders, these fans!—Ed*

ALL HIS LIFE!

Sirs:

Now, what I *do* like—(you can relax, kid) is Burroughs (all my life), Adam Link, the lovable Oscar, Hank Cleaver, and such people as those reformed space-bandits, or salvage boys of space. Bad, bald men with hearts. Not all good—not all bad—but human! And with real humor to make me believe they might exist.

By the way, from your explanatory notes I get the idea that you believe the stories. You tickle my risibilities, no fooling, with the care you take in them. Go to it, fellah, that's one part of the magazine that gives it oomph—I'm for you.

All in all, you got yourself a now steady reader, sir, because of the mag for one, and because of something even better—your attitude toward the people. The friendly spirit I have found throughout is worth more to me than any story printed. And I like them, too, so you see—I like you all!

I have no kick on the artists except they aren't too *good* on the inside. But I don't much care because I picture my own characters, anyhow.

G. Cunningham,
115 Mira Loma St.,
Vallejo, Calif.

Certainly we believe our stories. Gospel truth, every one of them. We can point to hundreds of things that have come true that were invented by our authors. Hitler invaded Belgium and France with one of your editor's own pets, the supertank.—Ed.

NO SMALL TYPE

Sirs:

A word or two (or more) on your Ann-ish. First, I'll throw a few roses your way. The front and back covers were good and "The Lost Race Comes Back" and "The Strange Adventure of Victor MacLiesh" were the two bests of the issue. Oh, yes, "The Iron Men of Super City" was interesting.

The rest of the stories were just adventure yarns and were definitely no good. The current Adam Link story is nothing to brag about either.

Please, please, don't use small type again.

In the future I want larger type, better stories and fewer departments.

L. L. Schwartz,
229 Washington St.
Dorchester, Mass.

Okay, we'll stick to our regular type. You aren't the only one who likes it. We have to proof-read reams of the stuff!—Ed.

WORTH MORE THAN 25c

Sirs:

Your 15th Anniversary issue was excellent; worth much more than 25c. "The Lost Race Comes Back" was the best story in this issue, with Adam Link only a few yards behind.

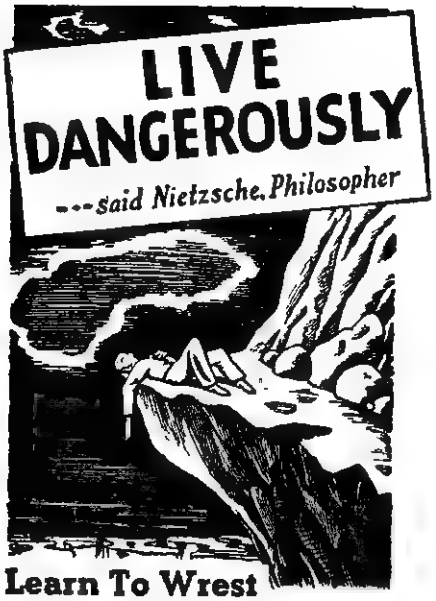
Jay Jackson's illustration for "Rocky Gordon's Billion-Dollar Trap" was *punk*.

Thomas Brackett,
Box 214,
Winnsboro, La.

YOU'RE WELCOME!

Sirs:

I am one of those regular readers of yours that writes in to tell you that this is the first letter and that we like your magazine very much. Especially since reading the Quarterly and the May issue. Man! That's what I call getting your



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money's worth in a SF magazine.

Now to list the stories in order:

(1) As usual I would place "Adam Link Faces a Revolt" first.

(2) "Lone Wolf of Space." That's a good combination of authors that wrote that story.

(3) "The Lost Race Comes Back." Don Wilcox must spend all of his time writing science fiction stories; two stories in one issue and both splendid

(4) "The Iron Men of Super City." This story didn't have enough of the original Ben Gleed, the Speed King.

(5) "The Fate of Asteroid 13." I could go on and on for six more stories but that would take too much room.

If this is printed, thanks

Frank Griffin,
Weiser, Ida.

DRAFT 'EM!

Sirs:

Personally I think that you have "something" in your magagzine. It is very educational as well as interesting. The author whose stories I like best is Don Wilcox. I think "The Lost Race Comes Back" was a darn good story. In fact, I think your May issue as a whole was pretty darn good. If anyone disagrees with me I hope they get drafted in the army. The boys in camp who read your mag are called the "brains" of the outfit because they can understand your "stuff." A lot of the boys here don't read your mag because they can't understand what it is all about. They say "How can you read that 'lousy' stuff", but I tell them that if they had a little brains they could read it, too.

By the time you receive this letter we will have moved to Camp Edwards in Massachusetts. I am taking along a supply of your old mags and also will continue to buy your newer ones. In this way I can see how your authors' stories are improving. Why not give Adam and Eve Link a son? Mr. Binder could weave a pretty good tale if he put a son into it. See what the other fans think of the idea. Thanks!

Pvt., F. C., Leonard Forman,
Battery "A",
198th C. A., (A.A.),
Camp Upton, L. I., N. Y.

We don't know what the other boys in your outfit will do to you for the crack you take at 'em about brains. But better duck—because a lot of soldiers are reading AMAZING STORIES *nowadays.—Ed.*

ANOTHER CONTEST?

Sirs:

If I ever read another letter in your magazine that starts off like this, "I am only 12 years old and I have been reading your magazine for 5 years, etc.", or "I am probably your youngest reader and I just want to say that, etc.", I will go stark, raving mad! Who cares if your read-

ers are two or fifty? I don't. After all, children, that is, *most* children of that age don't understand much, much less science fiction. So, why bother to print such things that are incredibly dull and a little stupid.

After re-reading the "Winking Lights of Mars" a second time, it puzzled me quite a bit. The title is very misleading, for the lights weren't on Mars, but on Earth

As for that letter from some girl on page 142 of the April issue of AMAZING, well. I would certainly like to see a cover by *three* artists at once.

But, back to something a little more interesting; it is too bad that you don't have a John Carter story in every issue of AMAZING STORIES. And for the Adam Link series, well, the more the merrier. When are you going to have another Adam Link story? Soon? Very soon? The cover on the back about the cities of different planets are most interesting, keep it up. When are you going to have another contest?

Sincerely yours,
James Ladd,
Box 2332,
University Station,
Gainesville, Florida

The August issue of our companion magazine, FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, features a new contest that you'll like. There are $65.00 in prizes, too. Why not enter it? We guarantee it'll be fun.

Adam Link is returning soon. Also John Carter. And after him, David Innes of Pellucidar. —Ed.

TELEPATHY?

Sirs:

Is my face red! and do I feel embarrassed!

WHY??? Well this MENTAL Telepathy thing has me going!

First of all, my husband does NOT read STF magazines, doesn't even approve of them! But several weeks ago we happened to get into a discussion as to what would happen if, in some way, our little town should suddenly be cut off from the rest of the world. In fact, it became quite a HEATED discussion! Eventually he suggested it would be good material for one of the "SO CALLED science fiction stories", as he put it. I came back with the snappy retort that I had NEVER read just that kind of a science fiction story . . . that is, using just that "plot" . . . that I thought that even I could write an interesting story with such good material for the plot. One word led to another and he "dared" me to try my hand at writing a story that he would read . . . along with several disinterested friends. Result—several sleepless nights spent at the typewriter—and a finished short story that everyone SAID they enjoyed . . . even suggested I send it in to some STF Editor to read . . . and possibly publish.

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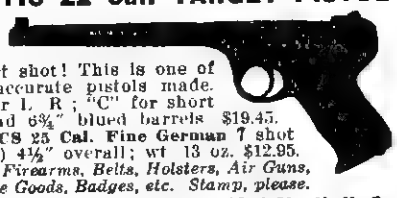

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28x4.75-20	2.10	.95
29x5.00-19	2.25	1.05
30x5.00-20	2.40	1.06
6.20-17	2.45	1.15
28x5.25-18	2.45	1.15
29x5.25-19	2.45	1.15
30x5.25-20	2.50	1.15
31x5.25-21	2.80	1.15
6.50-17	2.75	1.15
28x5.50-18	2.75	1.15
29x5.50-19	2.75	1.15
6.00-16	3.15	1.45
6.00-17	2.85	1.15
30x6.00-18	2.85	1.15
31x6.00-19	2.85	1.15
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33x6.00-21	3.10	1.25
32x6.50-20	3.20	1.35

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picked a certain well-known science fiction magazine—and lo and behold right on page ONE is a story with practically the same idea.

Here are the facts:

1—The published story has people living inside a dome—mine is a "FORCE" enclosing a small town.

2 MY "people" learn a new science so do the ones in the published story!

3—MY "people" eventually break the "Force" after 500 years and find a savage remnant of a once glorious race.

In the published story the savages break "in" the dome, regain their senses and become civilized! And so on . . . all through both stories! These are just a few of the highlights. THEN to top the climax I see MY letter finding FAULT with AMAZING for publishing a story almost identical with one in another magazine! AM I EMBARRASSED!! IS MY FACE RED!!! DO I HUMBLY APOLOGIZE??? It was the FIRST time I ever found fault—serious fault with any of the science fiction magazines—and believe me it's the LAST!

MENTAL TELEPATHY . . . well, even my staid, very conservative, very "old fashioned" husband said, "COULD BE!"

MENTAL TELEPATHY?? Remember, I'm NOT a writer of Science Fiction—never had a story published . . . yet . . . here's my own typed story . . . bad spelling and all . . . and here's the published one . . . by a writer I've never met and who lives miles from here and probably never heard of ORCHARD PARK, N. Y.!!! And surely not of ME!!!

WHAT IS THE ANSWER?? I want to KNOW!

Ginger Zwick,
Just-A-Mere Farm,
Box 284,
Orchard Park, N. Y.

Well, Ginger, we're afraid we can't tell you how these things happen, but most authors will tell you of similar experiences. Maybe it's just coincidence.—Ed.

BURROUGHS BETTER

Sirs:

Your June issue of AMAZING received and read. Burroughs is getting more and more like his old self. BLACK PIRATES OF BARSOOM is excellent, the best of the series yet. John Carter has always been my favorite character and I've been reading about him long before I knew of a magazine called AMAZING STORIES. This last yarn of Burroughs', more than the others, brought back the old atmosphere of Mars and the fast action of Carter. Swell, I'm waiting for more.

J. Allen St. John must share the praise, as his cover and inside illustrations did more than their share to help me enjoy the yarn. They were as good as ever. After all, what would be Burroughs without St. John. They just seem to go together.

I'd like to inform your readers that I'm again publishing the amateur magazine COSMIC TALES. My first issue of the new series is already out (your copy in the mails) dated APRIL-MAY-JUNE, 16 pages mimeographed and selling for 10c a copy. Cover by famous FRANK R. PAUL, material by H P. LOVECRAFT, SAM MOSKOWITZ and THOS. S. GARDNER, all well-known stf authors. Inside illustrations are by the young, new stf artist, John Giunta.

Congrats on *Fantastic Adventures* going monthly. I hope it sticks this time. I'm looking forward to the next of Burroughs' yarns in that magazine.

James V. Taurasi,
137-07 32 Ave.,
Flushing, New York

Thanks, Jimmy!—ED.

FROM OHIO U

Sirs:

Have just finished your May issue, which was a dandy. Sure did like that grand picture on the cover. As for that swell yarn by McGivern, "The Masterful Mind of Mortimer Meek," it rates tops with us.

R. J. Owens,
239 Baker Hall, O.S.U.,
Columbus, Ohio

F. R. Stofer,
237 Baker Hall, O.S.U.,
Columbus, Ohio

You give us the old college okay, boys, and we appreciate it! McGivern is a Chicago U. boy, and made the football team just when they dropped the sport in the Big Ten. Your correspondence corner request will be in the next issue.—ED.

ABOUT THE NEW ADAM

Sirs:

I've received my copy of the Weinbaum "The New Adam" and the June issue of AMAZING, the first of my year's subscription. I think your readers would be interested in knowing whether Weinbaum has any other book-length novels. "The New Adam" is enthralling.

I wish especially to compliment your new artist, Magarian. His illustration for "The Lost Treasure Of Angkor" was one of the best I've seen. I fear some of the other artists use their people as mere props to display atom-busters, etc. Magarian's picture is real art. I blush to admit that I spent more time gazing yearningly at the beautiful Mera than I did reading the story. I hope my wife doesn't read this! *Let's have more Magarian!*

Lucien W. Druge,
RFD 1, Box 127F,
La Grange, Ill.

No, Weinbaum has no other book-length novels. And we are sorry to report that "The New Adam" is no longer obtainable. We'll have more Magarian, you can be sure.—ED.

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HOMER HIGGINBOTTOM

Sirs:

Hahahahahaha!

Does the editorial and writing staff read the papers? Heh!

Anyday California needs a rain machine to bring a little mist—gads!—our basement is flooded now. Rain machine in California . . .

Or Florida for that matter.

Chuckle . . .

Joe Fortier,
1836 39th Ave.
Oakland, Calif.

So we hear . . . —ED. *(Haw)*—ED.

MORE FAN CLUB—MORE OOMPH!

Sirs:

Fan Club with Oomph, eh? Well, the Pittsburgh fans have nothing on us. The Golden Gate Futurians hold meetings every second and fourth Saturdays of the month at 831 Central Ave., Alameda. There are both guys and gals. From Berkeley hails Northern Cal's prettiest, and S. F. holds a real Adonis! Remember, this is where Coblentz and the others hail from! ANdover 2559 for the dope.

Joe Fortier

QUIZ ANSWERS

(Quiz on page 133)

Ingredient

(1) Fountain pen points. (2) Bombs (3) Perfume. (4) Aluminum utensils. (5) Oleomargarine. (6) Whitewash. (7) Opium. (8) Pillows. (9) Chewing gum. (10) Paint. (11) Twine. (12) Varnish. (13) Dye. (14) Fuel. (15) Coconut oil.

Number, Please

6, 8, 11, 10, 2, 12, 1, 13, 5, 14, 3, 9, 7, 4.

True or False?

True, True, False, True, False

A Little Ornithology

(a) white, yellow. (b) Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall. (c) Osprey, Herring Gull, Great Horned Owl. (d) House Wren, Brown Thrasher. (e) Snipe, Gadwell, Road Runner.

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CORRESPONDENCE CORNER

Walter Tevis, 13 yrs., 700 Franklin Ave., Lexington, Ky., would like to buy old SF magazines; send list . . . Mrs. Dolores Lapi, 515 82nd St., North Bergen, N. J., wishes to correspond with anyone, anywhere, and will answer all letters immediately . . . Pvt. Samuel Bernstein, 18 yrs., 67th Materiel Squadron, Elgin Field, Valparaiso, Fla., would like pen pals from all over the world between 17 and 19, interested in aviation, baseball and science fiction . . . Louise Holbrook, 71 St. Stephens Ave., Keasbey, N. J., would like to correspond with skating fans and those interested in bowling, photography, stamp collecting and trading stickers from skating rinks . . . Robert Hageman, Jr., 18 yrs., Sanborn, Minn., would like to communicate with those interested in exchanging U. S. and foreign issues (stamp collecting); also will sell back issues of AMAZING STORIES cheap . . . S. M. Ritter, 1160 Simpson St., N. Y. C., has a list of about 30 magazines to trade for 1941 issues . . . Louis Kopeny, 2240 N. Kilpatrick Ave., Chicago, Ill., would like to hear from anyone of either sex about 15 yrs.; preferably from outside Illinois . . . Nat Silberstein, 1826 Trafalgar Pl., Bronx, N. Y., is desirous of buying, swapping and corresponding with "nature" and "pet" fans over 14 yrs. . . . C. Hidley, 2541 Aqueduct Ave., N. Y. C., wants to buy perfect, inexpensive pre-1936 magazines; send price lists . . . R. John Gruebner, 2306-N. 40th St., Milwaukee, Wisc., would like to hear from anyone around 14-16 yrs interested in joining a science fiction club in Milwaukee . . . Jerry Gordon, 288 W. 92nd St., N. Y. C., will sell to highest bidder H. G. Wells' "The World Set Free"; good condition . . . William E. Shaw, Jr., Route No. 1, Box 266, Rocky Mount, N. C., desires correspondents from all over the world, either sex, any age . . . Everett Robertson, 1140 S. 10th St., Slaton, Tex., would like to obtain the complete "Romance of the Elements" appearing in AMAZING . . . Pvt. Weldon W. Robinson, 8th School Squadron A. C., Building 2-325, Chanute Field, Rantoul, Ill., 22 yrs., would like to correspond with boys and girls whose hobbies are outdoor sports, writing letters and stamp collecting . . . Bill E. Galloway, 1114 Bandera Rd., San Antonio, Tex., 20 yrs., wants to communicate with girls about 18 yrs. in foreign countries; he was born in Mexico and can write Spanish . . . Mark Reinsberg wishes to announce his withdrawal, temporarily, from fan activities due to circumstances beyond control.

A CITY ON SATURN

BY HENRY GADE

Our back cover depicts Frank R. Paul's vivid painting of a Saturnian city and here is the author's story of that city

SATURN, being one of the four giant worlds of the solar system, is one of the four "young" planets. By young, we mean literally, less cooled off than the smaller worlds, because of their size. Therefore, life has not developed to the stage it has on our own globe.

Artist Paul, on the back cover, has drawn his conception of this "young" world's city, and the people who inhabit it.

Saturn must still be in an inchoate stage, and its terrain is undoubtedly far from settled. It is quite possible that earthquakes and land-shifts and volcanic eruptions are constantly changing the aspect of the terrain.

Thus, we may quite conclusively assume that cities on Saturn do not consist of skyscrapers, but of dwellings built low and solidly to the ground, able to resist stresses and strains and shoulder aside the debris of landslides and moving masses.

Saturn is also far from the sun, being beyond the orbit of Mars, and is a frigid world, perhaps kept only from being a completely frozen one by the internal heat of the planet.

Therefore, no city could be built on the open plains of Saturn, but in the shelter of a volcano wall, perhaps even in the pit itself, where vegetation could grow under the heat of geysers and volcanic ventholes.

We would find our capital city of Crisium built in the crater of the largest volcano, its red-metal city-buildings lining the sheer walls of virgin granite that form its most solid foundation.

Toward the center of the pit, there would be no buildings, this area being used for cultivation and growing of the peanut-like tubers that the people eat almost exclusively.

The power plant of the Saturnians would be an adaptation of the steam-turbine motor, being built over a huge fumarole whose escaping gases would rotate its multiple fins and cause it to spin much as does a globe-ventilator atop an ordinary Earth ventilating stack, except on a much huger scale.

The science of the Saturnians would not be very advanced, and this gas-turbine motor would be their highest type of mechanism.

The people of Saturn are envisaged as an insect-like people, possibly of the spider family. They possess a bulbous, gaseous interior body, in which digestive functions would be carried on by an acid or gas breakdown of the rough tubers which make up their food supply.

They would have spidery legs which would enable them to walk over the unstable portions of the planet where treacherous sands and gas-bubble formations in the mud and ooze of the icy-cold plains would offer a death-trap for a heavier being such as we of Earth.

They would have little brain development, and no heads, beyond a small protuberance, would serve as the primitive sense organ, perhaps much different from our Earthly senses, functioning on a principle of temperature change. Thus, it would sense the approach of another creature by the heat of its body.

Its arms would consist of four octopus-like tenacles, springing from its bulbous top just below the sense organ. These tentacles would be very facile and swift, plucking the fruit from the plants in the garden areas.

These arms, when folded down, would enclose the entire body in a protective covering, much as the four sections of a divided lemon or orange peel could be replaced to cover the fruit.

Two of these arms could be used to pluck the peanut-tubers and the other could carry the receptacle in which they were placed.

Since the atmosphere of Saturn would be of a poisonous nature, breathing would be through a filtering membrane which would remove poisons.

The interior of the buildings of the spider people of Saturn would be simple tunnels which would lead down into natural openings in the rock itself, through which inner-heat from the planet's core would seep, borne by the rising gases. Thus, it is possible that the Saturnian, before leaving his abode, would breathe of the gases, store up oxygen, and also heat, in the bulbous portion of its body, just as hot-air balloons retain the heated air put into them for an appreciable length of time.

An item of interest would be the scene in the heavens as viewed from Crisium, for stretching across the sky of Saturn is the beautiful, and magnificent, arch of its multi-colored rings. The rings which were once its moon.

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CRATER CITY ON SATURN

Crisium, city of Saturn, is built in the crater of a vast volcano. It is a city heated by geysers and inhabited by weird spider people. (Page 145 for complete details)